JOHN BULL, week ending DECEMBER 27, 1941.

JOHN BULL

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3D

AIR FIELD DEFENCE THE TRUTH

COME ALL YE FAITHFUL By The Editor

CHRISTMAS GREETINGS TO ALL READERS

You need to get the greatest goodness out of every drop of milk to-day. So remember cocoa helps your milk to do you even more good. Your doctor will tell you that cocoa is a food in itself. And you know how the children love it! If you want your milk and money to go further — your meals to be more nourishing — remember BOURNVILLE.

MAKE THE MOST OF YOUR MILK WITH

BOURNVILLE COCOA

* WHY IT SHOULD BE BOURNVILLE
★ GIVING FOOD VALUE
★ MILK—FOR BLOOD MANUFACTURE
★ PHOSPHATES—FOR HEALTHY GROWTH
★ AID TO DIGESTION
★ VITAMIN D—VITAL TO HEALTH

LESS THAN PRE-WAR PRICE

5D PER ¼ LB

When tobacco's scarce!

Some men never get the best out of their pipes. They seem unable to keep them burning evenly and coolly to the end. Result is they don't get all the pleasure they might and they waste tobacco. This is bad enough in peace time, when Four Square is fairly plentiful. It's far worse now, when supplies of top grade leaf are restricted by the war. Every one of us ought to be getting the best out of each fill. And we can, if we follow the Old Hand's hints, one of which is printed below.

Hint No. 2

Pack your pipe tightly enough to ensure that each strand of tobacco is close up to the next, but not so tightly that it is difficult to draw. Fill from the bottom of the pouch and top the bowl off with the smallest shreds of tobacco, which light more easily than the long strands.

FOUR SQUARE

PURE TOBACCO—NO ARTIFICIAL FLAVOURING—EIGHT DIFFERENT BLENDS—ALL MEDIUM STRENGTH 1/6½ TO 1/10½ PER OUNCE

"Well this *is* a welcome!"

"I knew you'd be pleased... had to try three or four shops . . . but thank goodness there's still V.P. to be had if you make an effort."

V.P. POINT BRAND

RICH RUBY * 3/9 PER BOTTLE

V.P. RICH RUBY — A rich, full bodied, generous wine of Port character, mellow and mature.

V.P. BRITISH SHERRY — is a fully matured medium sherry of delightful aroma and delicacy.

V.P. SWEET WHITE — is a white sweet wine of Port character, with fine delicate bouquet.

Obtainable through Wine Merchants and Licensed Grocers only.

What do I do...

when I write to Eire or Northern Ireland?

I remember that if I make my letter brief, it will get there quicker, (and this also applies to all letters sent overseas.) I do not forget to use a *new* envelope, and not an economy label, otherwise my letter will be returned to me.

I do not enclose newspaper cuttings, photographs, greeting cards, or any printed matter. I can, however, send Christmas and New Year greeting cards between 6th and 31st December, provided I put only one card in each envelope.

Cut this out—and keep it!

Issued by the Ministry of Information

Space presented to the Nation by the Brewers' Society

'Warm' foods and Warming foods

The heat in hot foods and hot drinks is comforting, but the comfort is superficial and temporary—it's like warming your hands at a fire. But some foods are warmth-giving by nature: whether you take them hot or cold they will warm you all through. Chief among them are fats and oils, sugar and jam, bread, flour, cereals, potatoes, cheese. These help to generate energy by supplying the engine of the body with fuel to burn. So when you're using the oven or the hot-plate, always remember to cook a few extras, a few warmth-giving dishes, to eat cold. In this way you'll keep your bodily fires brightly burning, and save fuel, too.

HOT RASCALS

Boil ½ lb. of potatoes in salted water and mash while they are hot. As soon as they are cool enough to finger, rub in 4 ozs. of self-raising flour. Mix with a tablespoonful of chopped parsley, if you have it. No fat or liquid is required. Roll out at once, to a thickness of 1 inch. Cut into rounds about 3 ins. across and bake in a brisk oven.

When cold, split open and spread with margarine and a generous portion of the following mixture:—

Peel and grate a medium-sized raw beetroot, chop it finely with 3 or 4 inside sticks of celery and mix with 1 teaspoonful of grated horseradish, pepper and salt to taste and a dessertspoonful of chutney.

CARROT COOKIES

1 tablespoonful of margarine, 2 tablespoonfuls of sugar and a little extra for sprinkling on the tops of the cakes, 4 tablespoonfuls of grated raw carrot, 6 tablespoonfuls of self-raising flour or plain flour and ½ teaspoonful of baking powder. A few drops of vanilla, almond or orange flavouring.

Cream the fat and sugar together until it is light and fluffy. Beat in the carrot and flavouring. Fold in the flour. Drop spoonfuls of the mixture into small greased patty pans. Sprinkle the tops with sugar and bake in a brisk oven for about 20 minutes.

CHEESE SALAD

Mix together a breakfastcupful each of finely shredded white heart of cabbage, cold boiled potatoes and grated raw carrot. Add a few sticks of celery, chopped into inch lengths. Sprinkle the top with 3 ozs. grated cheese and decorate with watercress. Serve with mustard sauce instead of the usual mayonnaise. Enough for 4.

FREE SUPPLIES of Fruit Juice and Cod-Liver Oil to ALL BABIES under 2

This scheme started on Dec. 8. Apply with the child's Yellow Ration Book at your Local Food Office.

FOOD FACTS No. 74

ISSUED BY THE MINISTRY OF FOOD, LONDON, W.1

RESERVED MEN...

Do the war's biggest job

Flying in the R.A.F. is the most important war job a man can do—and so vital that you can even be released from reserved occupations to do it! So come forward now! Go to the R.A.F. Section, nearest Combined Recruiting Centre (address from any Employment Exchange), and say you want to volunteer for flying duties. If you cannot call, post this coupon (unsealed envelope 1d. stamp). Age limits—31 for Pilots, 33 for Observers.

To Air Ministry Information Bureau, Kingsway, London, W.C.2. Please send "Flying Duties" leaflet.

I am / am not in a reserved occupation.

AGE.....

NAME.....

ADDRESS

JB/27/12

Healthy dogs make good companions

Despite wartime handicaps, your dog will always be healthy and happy if you give him his regular Bob Martin's. Just 'one a day' will keep him always fit, friendly, companionable.

BOB MARTIN'S CONDITION POWDERS

keep dogs fit

For Blood, Veins Arteries and Heart

Elasto The Wonder Tablet

Take it—and Stop Limping!

NO ailment resulting from poor or sluggish circulation of the blood can resist the curative action of 'Elasto,' the tiny tablet with wonderful healing powers. Get a supply from your chemist or write for a Free Sample and Booklet.

'ELASTO' (Dept. 138), Cecil House, Holborn Viaduct, London, E.C.

'Elasto' is sold by Chemists everywhere.

JOHN BULL

Thursday, for week ending Saturday, December 27, 1941.
93, Long Acre, W.C.2. Telephone: Temple Bar 2468.

"Come the three corners of the world in arms,
And we shall shock them; naught shall make us rue,
If England to itself do rest but true."

TREASURE

● Some JOHN BULL readers have helped the war effort far more than they can realise.

They have written to tell us of dumps of rusty iron and other "scrap" in disused quarries and forgotten wasteland.

Their letters have brought a glint into the eyes of Ministry of Supply officials. And our munition factories will be kept going in consequence.

Yes, it's as serious as that. Uncle Sam's entry into the war means that some of our war plants will be held up unless we supply the raw materials ourselves instead of importing them from the U.S.

So rusty girders and mounds of scrap steel are real treasure trove nowadays—as vital to our folk in the Forces and the factories as waste paper.

Many, many more readers can help to equip the troops by writing to JOHN BULL.

Write about waste paper that isn't being collected. Write about scrap metal you see lying around.

We cannot promise to answer your letters. We do promise to bring them immediately to official attention.

And JOHN BULL, Whitehall—and the troops—will be grateful.

Straight from the Shoulder

NOT GOOD ENOUGH

SHAME nor indignation cannot offset the defects revealed in Britain's war position.

Public feeling is no substitute for organisation and foresight by our leaders.

That feeling, that much-needed foresight and organisation, should be directed to one aim—to make sure our fighting men get the arms and leadership they want.

Wanted Urgently

In Malaya there is a "crying need" for aircraft.

From Libya comes a plea for more tanks.

Both aircraft and tanks may soon be in tremendous demand because of Axis designs on Spain and Turkey.

Into Action

We shall want to know why they were not provided for the Far East. We must see they are provided in time for the Near East.

Certainly we must keep *more* than an adequate force of aircraft in Britain.

But all the rest—every plane that can be spared with assurance—should be sent to those other sectors of our World Front where action is imminent.

Shortage

Hitherto, that has not been done.

It was not done in Greece. It was not done in Crete.

Evidently it has not been done in Malaya.

Mistakes

So once again we are appalled by the results of failure to learn from the sorry mistakes of the past.

Burma has been cut off from Malaya. Kota Bahru, our most vital airfield in the Far East, is in enemy hands.

Two of our mightiest battleships are at the bottom of the ocean. Singapore is menaced by direct attack. Hong Kong is beset on all sides, Borneo invaded.

Co-ordinate!

Since war began, only by attack in Libya and occupation of Timor have we varied our humiliating record of withdrawal and defeat.

In every phase of that record, proper co-ordination and adequate numbers of aircraft and tanks would have prevented the heroism of our troops from being wasted.

Now We Advance

Now, in Libya, we are again advancing at the rate of twenty miles a day.

But still more tanks are needed there. And the need will grow the farther we plough through the sands towards the Axis concentrations on the Tunisian frontier.

Tanks in great numbers will enable us to advance quickly enough to forestall Hitler's plan of sending new armies through Spain to North Africa.

Threat to Turkey

Nazi forces in the Greek islands off the Turkish coast are constantly carrying out landing and embarkation exercises.

Turkey will fight if attacked. But she needs powerful armed support—tanks and aircraft.

Roll Out the Bombers!

Spain is prepared for war. Vichy makes further surrenders to the Axis.

So here, too, we are confronted by peril—peril that should impel us to achieve the greatest production in the least possible time.

Not only production of tanks and fighter planes. Heavy bombers, too, are needed and will be needed in prodigious numbers.

Soviet Aims

Our great ally, Russia, is not content with her present advance.

Unlike other nations, she does not dangle before her people the prospect of better times in 1943 or 1944.

She aims at launching an even greater tidal wave against Hitlerism next Spring.

And for that she is looking to us for supplies.

New-Old Friend

China is battling bravely and unselfishly to help us. An old friend of Britain, she deserves to share in the admiration we feel for the gallant Greeks, the Russians, the Serbs.

But China, too, craves equipment of all kinds.

Asking the Impossible

The United States has heartened us by astronomical figures of future production. It backs its promise by imposing a 168-hour week in its arms factories.

But it cannot work miracles in a few weeks.

It cannot arm Britain, Russia, China, Turkey—and its own forces.

Tardy Progress

Nor should we lament Uncle Sam's past slowness to mobilise—we who have been caught unprepared after two years of war.

That is why JOHN BULL has argued for months that Britain must rely on her own production of bombers, fighters and tanks—and why JOHN BULL still says that our production is not good enough.

World Front

Now, by the sensational and sensible meetings in Washington and Moscow, JOHN BULL's plan for a World Front has been carried out.

The idea first suggested in these columns has been given the force of action by the Allied statesmen.

And the "grand strategy" for which President Roosevelt has appealed will be applied.

But Britain cannot leave it at that.

Lack of Method

The SOS from Malaya should lead to complete reorganisation of our resources.

There are factories in Britain where skilled mechanics are being sacked for lack of work.

Workers tell disgraceful stories of having to play cards or sleep during night shift because they have nothing else to do.

And there is still an appalling muddle in transport.

Sent to Coventry

Large numbers of women are taking the place of men in Coventry's foundries, machine shops and fitting depots.

But the men they displace are not found alternative jobs. They are sacked to be idle!

Money for—What!

In another Midlands town workmen are tired of earning what they openly describe as "money for jam."

It is good money. But they draw big wages for nothing more than idling and sleeping. And that isn't their fault.

In another Midlands centre a factory with fifty machines has only four or five continuously employed.

Luxury Trade

At an engineering firm employing a thousand men discontent is rife.

One joiner has been engaged at an official's private house for nearly a year—on odd jobs.

Skilled maintenance men are similarly employed at the manager's house. An engineer spends two days a week looking after the cars of the manager and his daughter.

In the factory itself men are "busy" on building decorative entrances to the offices.

Crime

It is criminal for managements to waste the time of skilled workers. It is also criminal that managements should be allowed to do so.

No less a crime against the nation is the lack of organisation that imposes needless strain on our transport.

And it is little short of criminal that transport and mining should still be entrusted to private ownership.

Plain Words

If it be pleaded that our defences in the Far East could not have been strengthened because of lack of supplies, there is this incontrovertible answer:

Organisation and co-ordination could have produced those supplies — and should now be used to produce the weapons our forces so badly require.

Public Is Willing

What stands in the way?

Not the public. The people of this country will do all that is expected of them.

That indeed is shown by the willingness of great numbers of men and women to work inordinately long hours every day of the week.

Way with Blacksheep

Most managements are no less eager to get on with the job of winning the war.

They are held back by shackles fastened on them by inefficient officialdom—by red-tape, by delays in supplies, by hold-ups in transport.

Many of them would approve drastic penalties for the minority of blacksheep managements. They would not object if the Government put such managements out of business.

Brass-hat Brass-wits

But there are others who should be displaced—the brass-hatted brass-wits who do not ensure perfect and smooth co-operation between the three Fighting Forces.

Too often they have assured us of readiness to meet the enemy whenever he chose to strike. And too often they have been found unready.

Two Questions

The Government has power to organise all industry.

Must there be further "withdrawals" before that power is used?

Must there be further humiliations before co-ordination is enforced not only in industry but in the Services?

(Continued overleaf)

JOHN BULL'S WARTIME SECURITY GIFT FOR 1942

● *An announcement of vital importance to every reader will appear in next week's issue*

STRAIGHT FROM THE SHOULDER

CONTINUED FROM PRECEDING PAGE

MANY builders have found an earthly paradise.

It's so easy to profiteer on repairs to bombed houses.

They use shoddy materials and scamp the work. Above all, they draw blood-money by grossly overcharging for labour and for work they have not done.

Bombshell

Innocent householders by the thousand have paid their bills without quibble, convinced they would get full recompense from the War Damage Commission.

Then they have had another bomb-shock.

Sometimes the Commission has slashed the bill by half. It won't pass inflated charges.

And so the unlucky householder has to pay the difference.

No Help

The Commission has tried in vain to stop the ramp.

Householders can arrange for the builder to receive his payment direct from the authorities.

But the building racketeers won't hear of it. They refuse to carry out repairs unless the owner agrees to pay the bill himself—and perhaps 50 per cent. down before the work is begun.

Remedy

Honest builders object that they can't get prompt payment from the Commission. However, banks would finance them on the Commission's promise to pay.

It would be a greater help to claimants if the authorities published a black list of builders who refuse to work under the official scheme.

Costly Errors

Sometimes, maybe, overcharging arises because builders are too busy to check their workers' wage-sheets.

That was the explanation given by two employers—one was Mayor of Tamworth last year—who charged Coventry Corporation too much for bomb repair work.

But the magistrates fined them £250 each, which may persuade quite a lot of builders to be more careful in their accounts.

Airmen in the Making

Careful is the word for the R.A.F.'s great comb-out. It won't leave many fit men in jobs that could be done by the less fit.

Even senior R.A.F. officers have to "share" a batman's services. That can't be said of the Army.

One C.O. saw a batman looking longingly at a 'plane the other day. "Interested in flying?" he asked.

The batman said he was very interested. Two days later he started training for aircrew duty.

Long Wait

But here's one familiar complaint: Men accepted for enlistment in the R.A.F. are still kept hanging around at home for months, yet appeals for recruits continue.

We know the Air Ministry wants to build up a big reserve. We know that recruits must wait their turn for training.

But why not tell them how long they may have to wait?

Pantomime Soldiers

Economy in man power has never been a strong point of the Army, of course.

Twice daily for a month the band of the North Staffs Regiment is playing in a provincial pantomime.

We haven't seen that show. But we've had a good laugh at some military ideas of making war.

Tally Ho!

We can even raise a smile at the general who has saved a Devon pack of beagles from extinction by taking them over to hunt with the Army.

"The hounds live with the troops," it is reported.

It is not stated, however, whether the troops like living with the hounds.

In the Open

Of course, that arrangement may find a use for food scraps. But more important material may be left to waste.

We are informed that some thousand pairs of Army boots have, for several weeks, been stacked in the open on a Welsh wharf.

The dockers don't like it. But they know now why they pay income-tax.

Hard Lines

One last martial oddity concerns an airman who confessed ignorance of the commissioned ranks and badges of the three Services.

To lighten his darkness he has been ordered to write them out fifty times each—a total of 1,650 entries.

It's tough that a grown man should be treated like a naughty schoolboy. And we doubt if it will toughen him to face the enemy.

Crowded Hospitals

Civilians have worse headaches than inability to distinguish a squadron-leader from a wing-commander. They are often unable to get proper treatment when they are gravely ill.

In some parts of the country, hospital services are breaking down under the strain of war conditions.

People who need prolonged in-patient treatment cannot get it. Patients are sometimes discharged before their operation wounds are healed, to make room for others.

Danger Area

A JOHN BULL man, touring some districts of Cambridgeshire, found local doctors working under considerable difficulties.

Typical town is Littleport. It has no cottage hospital, no health clinic for its 7,000 inhabitants; only one small maternity home, whose fees are far beyond the means of poor mothers.

There is small hope of getting urgent cases to hospital for life-saving operations; while maternity cases may have to go to a distant workhouse—to share it with the aged and epileptic.

They Died

In Great Yarmouth a man fell and was seriously injured. There was no room for him in hospital, so he was given treatment and sent home—to die four hours later.

In a Midlands town a labourer broke his leg. Attempts to get him into two hospitals failed; he was taken to one twelve miles away and there died after a few hours.

Get Busy!

Reorganisation of hospital services is no easy job in war time. Many hospitals have to reserve beds for air raid casualties.

But difficulties must be overcome. The position is serious and may become scandalous.

The Ministry of Health must get busy on a better allocation of existing accommodation.

Coupon Shortage

What has happened to those extra clothing coupons for growing children?

Parents would like to know.

It was expected that the coupons would be available at secondary and boarding-schools before the Christmas holidays. They weren't.

Now the schools have "broken up" there will be at least another month's delay.

Cause for Worry

Parents "needn't worry," officialdom explains, because there is no time limit on the coupons.

Presumably the official spokesman has no children of his own. Otherwise he'd know that youngsters need extra clothing for the winter—and that they don't stop growing in winter.

Dreary Fare

JOHN BULL has complained that thousands of war factories have no works canteen. We must also record a common complaint from factories that have canteens.

On the whole, food is good. But the cooking is bad.

Even in many British Restaurants, no attempt is made to vary the bill-of-fare. In one, roast beef has been the main dish every day for four months.

War excuses shortage of food. It is no explanation for dreary cookery.

Mouse a la Carte

However, someone has tried to brighten the dishes served to Gibraltar people evacuated to London.

We have told you before of the discomfort and poor food they are still compelled to suffer. Now they have something more exciting to discuss.

A cooked mouse was served up with their meat the other day.

Haughty Miss

A reader's little girl ran errands, looked after babies and did other odd jobs for three months to earn pennies. Then, proudly, she went along with 18s pence to buy her first savings certificate.

The haughty miss behind the post office counter refused to accept them.

This tiny incident illustrates a lot that is wrong with the war savings drive—and the Post Office.

Money Not Accepted

Here's another one: A reader, going to live in a Dorset village after being bombed-out, tried to put £3 in her Post Office savings account to help the War Weapons Week effort.

Village post office said it couldn't transact savings bank business. Our reader walked two miles to the next village, received the same answer.

Not to be beaten, she walked another two miles, and was again rebuffed.

Overdue

Finally, she had to wait until she went into the town of Sherborne.

Question that she and thousands more would like to ask the Postmaster-General is just this:

Isn't it time the Post Office put its savings organisation on a war footing?

Man Wasted

Next minor defect in the war organisation is revealed by the case of a young man, trained in mechanical and electrical engineering, who used to look after the motors at a colliery.

Three years ago he left for work of national importance.

Now he's been compulsorily sent back to the pit—not to drive motors, but to shovel slack on the pit bank.

Must He Starve!

Yet another defect compels seamen and Servicemen to go hungry while on leave.

Merchant seaman tried in many Liverpool shops to get his fortnight's meat ration. When the shopkeepers saw his emergency ration card, they all said they could supply only their registered customers.

Said the seaman sadly, "And I bring the stuff across the Atlantic."

Behind the News

● **In first ten days of retreat from Moscow, Nazis lost vehicles to supply 500,000 men—a deadlier blow than any other casualties.**

● *Experts agree that Hitler's material losses in Russia exceed £6,000,000,000—at least two years' total war effort of Germany.*

● Why so many Nazi planes have been destroyed on the ground in Libya is shortage of lubricants more than need to save petrol.

● **Nazi C.-in-C. in France, von Stuelpnagel, is now under Gestapo supervision carrying out Heydrich's "Kill the Hostages" policy, which means that Himmler is the real ruler of Occupied France to-day.**

● *Is Hitler really on the way out? Von List, new Eastern Front Commander-in-Chief, refused the job unless Hitler left military direction alone and returned to Berlin.*

● Himmler, Goebbels and Ribbentrop, who persuaded Hitler to attack Russia against military advice, have banded together to save their skins. Controlling Gestapo and Propaganda they are still very powerful, but conflict grows between Army and Party.

● **Famous sea wolf raider of the last war refuses to go out again. He says he can find no record in this war of raiders who have survived for long against the British Navy.**

● *Swindle behind another "collaboration" offer is the reduced payment of occupation costs in France. Nazis have simply raised the exchange rate of the occupation mark by the same percentage as payment reduction.*

● But shock awaits Hitler in Vichy North Africa—the attitude of the Arab population. Moslems have spread news of immense British strength in the Mediterranean.

● **Knowledge is spreading in Germany that disfigured and badly wounded casualties from Russia are sent to occupied countries. Result, depression is also spreading.**

● *Rumanian volcano may erupt soon. King Michael is virtually a prisoner in Italy for demanding return of remnants of smashed Rumanian armies from the Ukraine.*

Without Fear or Favour

By the Editor

COME, ALL YE FAITHFUL

TRADITIONALLY the Christmas season calls forth the finest qualities in human nature. We remember friends forgotten through the year. We show and are shown much special kindliness. All that is best in us comes to the surface.

And all that is best among the free peoples of the earth is coming uppermost *now*, even though the Christmas skies are overcast with the dark clouds of war and there is no peace anywhere in the world.

Men of goodwill are fighting for the simple happiness which is their rightful heritage. The champions of decency, honesty and kindliness are standing shoulder to shoulder against the powers of evil; against cruelty, treachery, greed, and vile intolerance.

Shorn of its gaiety, diminished in gladness, this third Christmas of the world war is heightened in significance. Its brief respite affords the opportunity to fortify our spirits and renew our high resolves.

A year ago the British Commonwealth stood virtually alone against the enemies of mankind. China was fighting her own war in the Far East, but we had not then made common cause.

To-day the whole English-speaking world marches under one banner and is leagued in friendship with the indomitable Russian and Chinese peoples.

At least four-fifths of the human race supports our cause and, even in enemy lands, the suppressed minorities, the hapless victims of gangster governments, pray for our victory.

This is a comradeship to lift up our hearts. It holds the seed of certain victory. It guarantees the outcome of the war, but *not*, without our own labour and determination, the rich harvest of enduring peace.

Australia, Canada, New Zealand, South Africa and all the smaller partners of the Mother Country have dashed the hopes and upset the calculations of our enemies. For they are with Great Britain heart and soul. They were free to choose and they chose to help us, not less, but more generously, than ever before.

Out of this complete partnership is being born and must be nurtured a totally new conception of Imperial brotherhood and Imperial responsibility.

For we are all members one of another. There can be no justice for any without justice for all. Every member of the British Commonwealth is entitled to expect equal prosperity, equal happiness—yes, and equal freedom—with every other.

NO less vital to our cause is the cementing of the new friendship which is being built up, brick by painful brick, between ourselves and our blood relations in the United States.

Had the English-speaking world continued in close alliance after the last war, this one need never have been fought. It is useless now to apportion blame either to America or to ourselves, but on both sides of the Atlantic we must have learned the harsh lesson of divided effort in a common cause.

JOHN BULL *dare not predict the ultimate fusion of all English-speaking peoples, but short of this—short, at least, of a common economic and social policy—the great Democracies can never lay a solid foundation for that better and happier world which both desire to build.*

Those who believe this must work for it. They must cease to criticise and forbear to envy. They must bridge the intervening Atlantic Ocean with true friendship and unstinted trust.

To say that we are all fighting for our lives is nothing but a truism. Germany, Japan and Italy are bent upon our total subjugation, if not destruction. But the mere salvation of our existence is something far short of our final goal.

We are fighting for the cardinal freedoms that Roosevelt has defined—freedom from want, freedom from fear, and freedom to think and speak and worship after our own fashion. The Axis Powers deny these elementary but essential human rights.

Well has Churchill said that "gangs and cliques of wicked men, and their military and party organisations, have been able to bring these hideous evils upon mankind, and it would, indeed, bring shame upon our generation if we did not teach them a lesson which will not be forgotten in the records of a thousand years."

In every way this relatively cramped and barren Christmastide reminds us of what we have given up and what we hope to attain. Tens of thousands of the children we love are passing the festival of childhood beneath a stranger's roof.

There are no excursion trains because the needs of war have priority of transport. There is no customary holiday because the factories and the Services can permit no idle hands.

There is little to buy, because what few goods there are must be shared by all, and little to spend because the country has first call upon all our earnings, as it should have first and final call upon all our profits.

What of that? We are building a new world for our children and our children's children; a world of equal opportunity in which every boy and girl shall be given the education that he or she is capable of assimilating.

WE are accepting compulsion now in the sure faith that, after victory, there shall be no more compulsion beyond the limits of proper service to our fellow men and women.

We are meeting heavier taxation and yet making more savings than we ever before deemed possible, and we are beginning to realise that the "unparalleled" sacrifices of war must and *can* be paralleled by the constructive sacrifices of a noble peace.

Looking round about us we see a contemptible and pitiful minority of anti-social people, wasters and slackers, cheats and profiteers, dullards and lunatics and rogues.

But beyond them and infinitely outnumbering them we observe the serried ranks of honest, kindly and decent men and women, our brothers and sisters, the dogged, patient, resolute British people, the salt of the earth.

It is to them and to us that the last carol singers of 1941 address the old, but still new and magnificent appeal: "Come, all ye faithful!"

And we *shall* be faithful, even unto death.

Fifteen Miles on a Dead Man's Chest!

CALLING ALL CURS: VII

By Gerald Kersh

CONSIDERING the sea—the "grey old widow-maker"—I think of the rough-riding transport ships.

Sailors never had an easy life since men first went out upon the waters.

The waves wait to wash them down. The thirty-two winds are ready to wipe them out.

Running a ship is hard work for hard men, even in peace time.

But now seamen have other enemies than the elements. They run between menacing skies and hostile depths. Storms, and the thousand other risks of navigation, are nothing in comparison with the destruction that submarines and aeroplanes can let loose upon the little metal shell that goes, throbbing, from continent to continent with war materials on board.

* * *

Forgive me if I state the obvious—men die and ships go down so that vital stuff can get to England. And anybody who wastes the merest ounce of transported stuff is playing ducks-and-drakes with the lives of good men.

So it comes to pass that there is a gentleman whom I had better call Mr. Fitz-Smith, living near London: a gentleman well known for his integrity in business, his scrupulous honesty with tradesmen, his lavish hospitality, his fine sense of humour, his easy good nature, his generosity to tenants, his charitable instincts, his fidelity to his wife, his love of children, his intelligent conversation and cultivated tastes; in short, a gentleman with nearly all the virtues—who nevertheless deserves to be locked up.

Mr. Fitz-Smith is wealthy. He made a great fortune in the City. Nobody begrudges him that, for it seems he did no harm to any man.

He lives in a big house in a tolerably safe area about fifteen miles from Charing Cross, and keeps several servants and a private secretary out there.

If no war had come, Fitz-Smith would have gone on being universally respected as a man about whom nothing bad could be said.

But the war has brought out the concealed nobility and the inward rottenness of many men and women. And—as if a hand had twitched away a veil that covered something slyly disgusting—Mr. Fitz-Smith stands suddenly revealed as a man who rides upon the dead.

It isn't black magic.

It has to do with petrol.

Through many years of prosperity, he had grown accustomed to riding, in his comfortable and high-powered car, wherever he chose to go.

* * *

If Mr. Fitz-Smith had one fault, it was that he was a little lazy. In fact, rotten with laziness. He couldn't be bothered with trains: little cars seemed somehow to cramp him. So he covered every kind of distance in his huge, gently purring limousine.

When the war broke out, and petrol was rationed, he continued to do so.

But how did he manage to get petrol beyond his allotted ration?

He didn't go in for shady business. He got his petrol directly, openly.

He is a rich man. He owns four cars: two of his own, one which his wife used to use, and a little one for the use of his secretary.

When rationing came into force he did not give up all his cars except the smallest one. No; he kept them all.

Wild? Luxurious?

* * *

But Mr. Fitz-Smith never counted the cost of anything that concerned his personal comfort. He kept his four cars, paid all necessary tax and insurance on them, and let them lie idle in his garage while he appropriated the four available petrol rations to his own car, which is a species of luxury liner on wheels.

Now this is a legitimate kind of wangle, but a shady one nevertheless.

Fine men bring that petrol over at the cost of their blood, for it is the Spirit of Modern War.

It is awful to think that sailors go bubbling down to the shadowy shifting sands of the seabed in order that Fitz-Smith may ride about in the style to which he has been accustomed.

Maybe he does not think of it like that.

But he should. He must.

Mr. Fitz-Smith has got to ride in a train.

HOW MUCH PAPER HAVE YOU SAVED?

Open Letters

★

Rt. Hon. D. MARCESSON, M.P.
Secretary for War

DEAR SIR,—There is a limit to the endurance even of soldiers.

Men in the Pioneer Corps are on fire-watch night after night at the docks, beside their daytime work and drills. Men in the R.A.P.C. do seven nights' fire-watch in succession every month in addition to normal duty.

I wager that the brass-hatted noodles who devised this system wouldn't care to operate it themselves.—JOHN BULL.

Rt. Hon. BRENDAN BRACKEN, M.P.,
Minister of Information

DEAR SIR,—It's startling to find you acting as a little Hitler.

I refer, of course, to the ban on the broadcast that Mr. D. E. W. Gibb was to have given on the subject of Regulation 18b. And I presume it could only have been banned with your permission—at the behest of Mr. Herbert Morrison.

If Mr. Morrison is so intolerant of criticism of his internment of suspected persons he has no right to remain as Home Secretary, and you have no right to suppress public criticism.—JOHN BULL.

Councillor Mrs. ELLA RECAN,
Croydon

DEAR MADAM,—"Like a palace" is how you describe Croydon's new electricity office, and I fancy it must be more comfortable than some palaces I have seen.

Why, in one room is a desk costing £88 10s. and a £56 carpet, while glass panelling round the showroom cost £102.

I don't suppose your indignation will be allayed by the electricity committee's excuse that the total cost of £135,200 was met from reserve funds.

But I imagine those gentry are too self-sufficient to realise that all our reserve funds will be needed to win this war.—JOHN BULL.

Rt. Hon. ARTHUR GREENWOOD, M.P.,
Better-Britain Planner

DEAR SIR,—Well worth your attention is a point raised by a grammar school headmaster, Mr. Edwin Manley.

He tells how a boy from his school could not become pupil to a district surveyor because his parents couldn't afford a hundred-guinea premium. So a far less talented boy will get the job.

You see the point: We must not only plan a fairer educational system, but make sure that young folk will get a fairer deal when they leave school.—JOHN BULL.

Lord QUICKSWOOD,
Provost of Eton

MY LORD,—Go on living in the past if you must, but don't expect others to do so.

Again you plead for the restoration of the City of London on its old intricate pattern, and again I marvel at your wistful admiration of the sunless alleys and death-trap streets that obscured the beauty of many historic monuments.

Yours is a sentimental voice in a wilderness of rubble and twisted girders, but I think it too feeble to impress those who will build a new and lovelier city.
—JOHN BULL.

The COUNTY COUNCILLORS,
East Sussex

GENTLEMEN,—A London magistrate's description of you as "callous and inhuman" should persuade you to take a closer interest in the children under your care.

One of them was that sixteen-year-old girl who, sent out into the world as a servant (at 5s. a week), was beaten by her mistress with a ruler till it broke and then with a saucepan until the handle came off.

But you made no inquiries when a complaint was lodged with you.

I'm glad she has been placed under the care of the L.C.C. She'll get a better deal than you were evidently prepared to give her.—JOHN BULL.

Mr. J. T. JONES,
Engineer to Heath R.D.C.

SIR,—Plainly, you want a lorry driver. You say so in letters 3½ in. high on a poster measuring 22½ by 17½ in.

You could have said so quite as effectively—and have saved a lot of valuable paper—in a three-line advertisement in the local Press.

But I imagine you would think that unbecoming to the dignity of a rural district council?—JOHN BULL.

The MAGISTRATES,
Carlisle

YOUR WORSHIPS,—Though your decision to ban Sunday-evening concerts may please local parsons, it is a depressing hardship for Service men and women.

You have already rejected the Western Command's request for Sunday cinema shows, so troops can only tramp the streets or hang around the taverns.

I advise you to change your mind before the military take compulsory powers to remove the gloom from Carlisle.—JOHN BULL.

Mr. CORDON ENGLAND,
London Air Park, Feltham

DEAR SIR,—With much interest and some disappointment I have read that luxuriously-produced pamphlet, "You Can Defend America."

Disappointment—because it is just a clever appeal to Americans to swallow the doctrine of "Moral Rearmament."

You and other business men are "convinced that British industry needs just such an inspiring message by Dr. Buchman and his associates."

And I am convinced to the contrary. We in this country want to hear far less from the people who used to say that Himmler was "a fine fellow" but are now too discreet to say what they think.—JOHN BULL.

Mrs. FLORENCE CLOSE,
Sunderland

MADAM,—I'm not going to add to the reprimand you deserved and received for leaving your four young children alone late at night.

The oldest is six and the youngest a year; you had been to a cinema and lost the last car home; and I don't doubt your word that it was the first time you had left them by themselves in the house.

I'm writing this only because other soldiers' wives have lapsed into the same cruel folly, and I hope your appearance in the police court will be a lesson to them as well as to you.—JOHN BULL.

Rt. Hon. ERNEST BROWN, M.P.
Minister of Health

DEAR SIR,—"If only you had as much capacity as you have self-satisfaction," said Mrs. Tate, M.P., recently, "what a great man you would be!"

Alas! it is painfully clear that you are not a great man.

Nothing in your record as Minister of Health—from the delay in removing children from the bombing of Plymouth to the delay in providing nursery schools for war-workers' children—can explain your self-satisfaction.

Now another delay has been made manifest.

It is one that threatens to impede our war effort and therefore our victory.

Vast new factories have arisen in the countryside.

But no houses have been built for the workers. No one has given a thought to their accommodation.

Are they expected to sleep in ditches or huddle against hayricks?

They need not. Within short travelling distance of many great new factories are empty houses.

You are holding them in reserve for people rendered homeless by bombing, and you won't allow them to be occupied by workers.

Unless you change your mind quickly, the Ministry of Aircraft Production will press for the removal of the ban on house-building.

So it's up to you.

It's up to you to build dormitory towns for war workers, to offer temporary accommodation while they are being built, and to co-operate with Mr. Bevin by providing nurseries for the children of women he is transferring to the factories.

Do this, and the public may be able to share your satisfaction.—JOHN BULL.

ARGUE IT OUT — By PALLAS

The Noiseless Clamour

OUR old, familiar phrase "looking forward to Christmas" meant little to most of us this year.

Indeed, some poor misguided fool observed to me that the whole thing nowadays was a mockery.

How could it be otherwise, he argued, with the whole world engulfed by seas of bitterness and hatred, with nations tearing at each other's throats and the human race—white, brown, and yellow—spreading a trail of blood and destruction without compare in history?

And when one pauses to consider the vastness of the conflict it may well seem the crowning hypocrisy to observe in any way a festival devoted to the Prince of Peace.

Every ocean, every continent is poisoned by the venom of war. Millions of people have died; millions more will perish before the final "all clear" comes to the world.

In the Darkest Hour

The very weight of calamity such as this might well numb all thoughts of prayer.

Victims of the war lust must look back into the "dear and longed-for years" and question vaguely whether or not they once lived without fear of persecution and without fear of hunger.

And yet such is the power of the spirit, such is the noiseless clamour of the soul for comfort, man and woman turn in the darkest hour of travail to some Being, some Creative Force beyond their knowledge or their understanding.

Out of the abyss comes the cry for succour. As the agony of enslaved men and women grows, so grows the call to prayer.

I have often discussed the quality of prayer; even accused those who pray only in times of trouble or difficulty of being selfish.

But looking at the greater canvas of war, unrolling ever more widely its picture of horror, I realise the impossible task of trying to assess this horror in terms of the individual.

Despite the misery that surrounds them, despite the loss of rights and privileges, despite the lash of the slave-driver, these men and women are still human beings.

Their Faith Stands Firm

They have memories. And those memories are most active at times like this.

They carry the persecuted families back to the days when the words "Happy Christmas" had meaning and sincerity; they conjure up visions of family reunions, of the innocent laughter of happy children.

Hitler has robbed these people of all they hold dear—except one thing.

A billion dictators cannot deprive them of their faith.

Let the churches moulder, let the polished pews be empty, let the Christian heritage of man be scorned and trampled.

Faith remains.

It burns this Christmastide as brightly as ever.

Christmas cannot be a mockery so long as the conscience of free men and those who would be free is unstained and untarnished.

Our thoughts to-day are in terms of war. We fight that peace might come.

That's why Christmas is a more solemn festival than ever. Its message must make us gird ourselves anew in preparation for that era when peace and goodwill shall again spread their message across the face of the earth.

JOHN ALLEN goes to see the divers, and gives you a glimpse of one side of the war about which you hear very little

What a Battle is Like Under the Sea

TOUGH, and hardened to the job after fifteen years of groping his way about sunken ships, the diver, a typical Northumbrian, had forced his way into the hold of his latest wreck.

It was a cargo vessel, victim of one of Hitler's bombers, and was laden to capacity with valuable raw materials for making munitions.

Jim Hawkins—since we can't give his correct name that will be as good as any—made a careful examination. Then he slipped out on to the sea bed again to signal for his tools.

The moment he was out of the ship he felt the ground under him shudder.

That didn't worry him much. He was used to that sort of thing since the war started.

Urgent Reply

His signal to the salvage ship on the surface was almost as casual as asking the time of day. "What's happening up there?" That was all.

The reply was urgent: "Jerry's attacking a convoy . . . get ready to come up."

Even that didn't worry Jim. "I'm staying down . . . send my tools," he signalled back.

But the next moment changed his ideas.

With the suddenness of a flash of lightning he felt the water grip him. For a moment he imagined he was in the toils of some giant sea monster.

Then, just as suddenly, the vice-like hug relaxed, only to return a few minutes later.

And it wasn't all that returned!

First the wheel of a plane floated past his head, and chasing after it came an engine which "landed" about twenty yards away. The sea bed shuddered again.

Jim didn't wait for any more. "I'm coming up," he signalled. Quickly he was hauled through the water.

Back on deck, his helmet off, and breathing pure air again, he realised why the message from his pals on the salvage ship had been so urgent.

While he was weighing up the chances of saving the valuable cargo from the hold of the wrecked cargo vessel a pretty hefty slice of hell had been let loose above him.

E-boats, a dive-bomber and some destroyers escorting a convoy had had a short, fierce scrap.

Under-Water Pressure

The destroyers had soon finished off the Hun bomber, but before it started shedding the bits that whizzed down near Jim it had released some useful-sized bombs.

As each one whined through the air, his pals on the salvage ship had prayed that it wouldn't land too near him below the waves. Two, at least, must have been fairly near, because the extra pressure—like a grip—on his suit had been caused when they exploded.

That's only one of the gambles with death that our divers have to take as just part of their job in war time.

Around our rugged coast, in fair weather and foul, these seasoned "sea-dogs" who don't know what fear is, take breath-catching risks nearly every day.

You don't hear much about them. Their work has to be secret, so there can't be much limelight, but it's tremendously important.

Material that plays a vital part in our war effort is wrenched from "Davy Jones's locker."

Sometimes the hard, gruelling work they put in far down in the eerie depths makes it possible to raise the wrecked ships so the hustling workers in the repair yards can make them ready to sail again and defy the U-boats and raiders on our vital sea routes.

You would be astonished if you knew how much these men do save from the wrecks that Dr. Goebbels gloats about—and, of course, always multiplies many times over.

Nerves of Iron

They have to have nerves of iron—because it isn't only sunken ships that they see when they are lowered to the sea bed.

Jim Hawkins, before he reached the hold of the ship I've told you about, saw something which might unnerve even the bravest of men.

Slowly, very slowly, he had slithered over the sloping deck until he reached a companion-way.

Down this he descended in his search for the main hold.

Suddenly in front of him stood a sailor. He seemed to be grinning fiendishly.

It was a corpse, remains of some poor soul trapped beneath decks when the German torpedo crashed into the merchantman.

Some day it will be possible to tell the inspiring story of the divers, and it will make grand reading.

Meanwhile, just a little more of the curtain can be raised on their deeds.

The recent award of the British Empire Medal to Giuseppe Gauci, a Maltese, enables me to reveal one story of bravery and devotion.

Hazardous Work

A valuable ship had been damaged below the water-line by torpedo-carrying aircraft, which were driven off by anti-aircraft fire.

It was decided to send down a diver to examine, and perhaps repair, the damage. Gauci at once volunteered for this hazardous work beneath the sea.

For hours he struggled hard to make the great ship safe again, conscious all the time that German aircraft were trying their hardest to reach the vessel to deliver the death-blow. R.A.F. fighters, however, kept them off, and Gauci worked on.

Eventually he was able to report that all was in order again, and the men above, who hauled him to safety, raised a cheer as Gauci set foot on deck.

By his courage, skill and determination he had saved a valuable merchantman.

"Don't forget the diver, sir!"—that comic interlude in a popular B.B.C. variety show—takes on a new meaning when you know what these gallant men are doing.

"Take it easy, Jim," his pal said, as the diver stepped over the side. "There's a rumour that Jerry is about."

"GET ME A SPARE LEG, QUICK!" shouted the Pilot

IN a dog-fight with Messerschmitts over Malta last March a young British pilot had his left arm shot off by a cannon shell. He baled out safely and was rushed to hospital, where the doctors told him he would never fly again.

To-day that young pilot—Flight-Lieutenant J. A. F. MacLachlan—is the leader of a famous squadron of our latest Hurricanes based in England.

Flying as skilfully as ever, he has already avenged his loss several times over.

MacLachlan is only one of many men who have lost arms, legs, even an eye, but who still fly for Britain.

There have been several in the R.A.F.

They Won't Stay Down

Others are doing less spectacular, but equally valuable service with the A.T.A. ferry service.

They are the men who Won't Stay Down.

Medical boards have passed them for flying duties, not because Britain is short of airmen, but because they have proved themselves to be as efficient as other pilots who retain all their powers.

Indomitable determination is their secret. When they told MacLachlan his flying days were over, he replied, "I'll bet you a fiver they aren't!"

He won.

Barely a fortnight later he was in the air, piloting his plane with one hand, gripping the control column with his knees when he had to move the throttle.

He was invalided home, but put in 250 flying hours in Africa on the way. This helped to convince the authorities here that he was still a fine pilot. He was passed for non-operational duties.

But that wasn't good enough.

He wanted to fight.

So a special metal arm and hand were designed for him—after tests in the cockpit of a Hurricane.

This "positively wizard gadget" includes several different metal "hands," each suitable for various flying operations, which he can attach and detach in a few seconds.

"The mobile thumb's especially good," says MacLachlan. "Handy for playing cards, you know. I use it chiefly for the throttle, but at a pinch I can steer with it as well."

With this arm he proved so efficient that, eight months after he was shot down, the Air Ministry passed him for full active service.

To-day the Hurricane in which he leads his squadron bears a picture on its side . . . an arm with a neat cannon hole in the elbow, and a hand giving the "V" sign.

Flying fast fighters and bombers from factories to airfields in Britain are several one-armed and one-legged pilots. Some days they fly five different types of plane—each with scores of controls in the cockpit—and cover anything up to 2,000 miles.

Men with One Arm

One man, Mr. Keith Jopp, has only the stump of his left arm and only one eye. He uses the stump for engine and undercarriage controls and his right for the control column.

Another had his right arm completely off at the shoulder, but he flies as well as any man with the left arm, using his knees to grip the column when necessary.

Several pilots who have lost arms or legs in action have continued to fly and fight in their 'planes.

"One of the war's most remarkable feats of endurance" was performed by a South African Tomahawk pilot whose foot was blown off over Libya.

He could have baled out to safety.

Instead, despite the pain and the difficulty of controlling his plane, he flew back to British territory. When nearing collapse he emptied his water bottle over his head to revive himself. He managed to steer with only his left foot.

And Went on Fighting

A Polish pilot had his right arm shattered and his right leg wounded by a cannon shell during a dog-fight. And with only one arm and leg in action, he not only flew on, but continued to fight the enemy.

The wonderful artificial limbs now being made will enable many such men to return to operational flying.

Douglas Bader—one of Britain's finest-ever pilots, despite his two "tin legs"—paved the way for them. Bader actually found his artificial legs an advantage. Several times they were riddled with bullet and cannon holes.

Once he landed after a sweep and shouted to the ground crew, "They've busted my leg again. Lift me out and get me a spare, quick! I haven't long to spare."

Half an hour later he was in the air again.

"He can do things I've never seen anyone do with a Spitfire," said Bader's flight-sergeant.

And that isn't all.

His golf handicap is only nine, and in an R.A.F. cricket match he took three wickets for six runs!

DECEMBER 27, 1941

THE RUSSIAN MIRACLE

By A. G. GARDINER

MOSCOW will live in history as the grave of the tyrants. It sounded the death-knell of Napoleon a century and a quarter ago. It has decreed the doom of Hitler to-day.

The magnitude of the defeat he has suffered and is suffering in the snows of Russia grows daily more impressive, its consequences daily more deadly.

It is not possible yet to take the full measure of that defeat, but we can measure the failure.

There still rings in our ears the bombast with which Hitler launched his lightnings six months ago. We were about to witness the greatest battle the world had ever seen. We were to witness, too, the most overwhelming military triumph.

In six weeks, perhaps, in ten weeks at most, all would be over. From the Red Square of Moscow the New Order in Europe would be proclaimed and the fate of the world determined.

This is a picture issued by the Nazis when they were advancing in Russia! What must their soldiers look like now?

Who does not recall those early Sunday morning broadcasts in July and August? Then, to the ringing of bells and the sound of trumpets, the relentless advance of the invincible host was announced to a triumphant Germany.

Who does not remember the "annihilation" of vast armies, the flinging in of "the last Russian reserves," the inexorable doom that mounted like a mighty wave to engulf the last fragments of enemy resistance?

Perhaps the movement was slower than had been expected by the good burgher of Berlin; but the end was no less sure. The Ukraine was overrun.

The Caucasian oil was within grasp. Leningrad was enveloped and tottering to its fall. Sevastopol was at its last gasp. At any moment the Black Sea would be in German hands and the Russian fleet immobilised, surrendered, or scuttled.

But, above all, the fate of Moscow was sealed. So certain was Hitler of this that, little more than two months ago, he went to Berlin to proclaim the fact and pre-empt the glory. This was to be his exclusive plum. No one was to share it. "Alone I did it."

Russia, he said, lay "defeated, never to rise again." The battle of Moscow which he had now begun would result in the final destruction of the enemy "before the winter."

* * *

And the winter has come. Russia is under her blanket of snow and in the grip of her iron frost. Those two terrors, *General Janvier* and *General Fevrier* loom ahead.

And Hitler's invincible host lies sprawling out in the bitter waste from Leningrad to the Black Sea.

Moscow stands and Leningrad stands and Sevastopol stands. Russia has risen in its might and flung back the invader. On every front he is broken and in retreat.

Before him an enemy righteously inflamed with the passion of revenge for the horrors he has inflicted.

Behind him hundreds of miles of frozen desolation alive with enemies sworn to his destruction.

* * *

IN THE PRESENCE OF THIS ASTOUNDING MIRACLE, LET US PAY HOMAGE TO THE GREAT PEOPLE WHO HAVE PERFORMED IT.

It is not Hitler and his Nazi Germany alone whom that miracle has astonished. It has astonished the whole world.

On that Sunday in June when the invasion was launched I asked a distinguished British soldier of my acquaintance what he thought of the prospects.

"The Germans will cut through the Russian army like a knife through butter," he said.

That represented the universal fear. The utmost that was expected was that the enemy would suffer heavy losses and that we should have a breathing space in which to gather our strength to meet the blow when the victorious enemy turned on us for the final grapple.

No one anticipated the amazing revelation that followed. We knew that the Russians were brave soldiers, and that fighting on their own soil for all they loved they would be formidable.

But we feared the internal disruption on which Hitler reckoned. We doubted the efficiency of the military machine.

Had not Russia always failed in the matter of organisation? Did not the war on Finland suggest that that weakness still existed?

Even the heroism with which the Russians met the invader and accepted the dreadful sacrifices of the "scorched earth" policy did not prepare us for the sensational recovery that, beginning with Timoshenko's sudden blow at Rostov, spread along the entire front like a flame and turned the whole tide of battle.

* * *

IN the light of this mighty achievement, much that was dark before becomes clear.

The fall of Litvinov, the Pact with Germany, the Russian invasion of Poland, the attack on Finland, the occupation of Bessarabia and the Baltic countries, the "liquidation" of the Army chiefs, all fit into a deeply considered strategy.

It is plain that every action of Stalin for the past ten years has sprung from the conviction that war with Germany was inevitable.

For that event he sacrificed everything to the task of creating, with extraordinary secrecy, a vast military machine that, aided by the Russian winter, could match even the might of the Germans.

He hoped that when Hitler struck he would first strike westward, just as we hoped he would first strike eastward. And he encouraged him to do so by his Pact of August, 1939.

It enabled him to build up a protective screen of buffer States between Russia and Germany from the Baltic to the Black Sea.

It gave him also two years in which to complete the war machine whose power and resiliency have been the major revelation of the war.

The effect of that revelation upon the war is before us. It is the immediate cause of the extension of the war to the Pacific.

If Hitler had knocked Russia out with the speed that he anticipated, he would have left the United States mumbling its "isolationist" bone to the end.

But the catastrophe in Russia put him in a dreadful dilemma. He was faced with the ghastly choice of getting out of Russia on any terms, or of spending next year in a desperate attempt to win a victory which this year has shown he cannot win.

That would mean that the game would be lost to him in the West. We should be free to build up our war machine, batter his own, and strengthen our position in the Mediterranean and North Africa.

* * *

THE ONLY ESCAPE FROM THE DILEMMA WAS TO SHIFT THE CENTRE OF GRAVITY TO THE PACIFIC.

He knew the strength of Japan better than we or America did, and he calculated that a sudden spring in the Pacific might save his apple-cart.

It would bring the United States in, but it was a gamble that might come off.

And Tojo's discovery that Roosevelt could no longer be bluffed encouraged him to take the plunge while our hands were full in the Mediterranean and while the United States Navy programme was far from complete.

Thus from the failure of Hitler's Russian gamble comes the gamble in the Pacific. It has had, and doubtless will still have, successes. They are the reward of treachery and surprise.

BUT TREACHERY AND SURPRISE DO NOT WIN WARS. IN SPITE OF THEM OUR ULTIMATE VICTORY IS MORE ASSURED TO-DAY THAN IT EVER WAS.

The Russian miracle precipitated Japan's stab in the dark. That stab in the dark has brought an infuriated America into the ring with a momentum and unity that nothing else could have provoked.

It is Hitler's last great gamble, and it seals his fate.

SWAFFER LIFTS THE LID

WHY ONLY BLAME FOR WORKERS?

● Alleged absenteeism and so-called slacking on the part of workers seem to me to get too large a share of the publicity.

This war, so far, has been History's greatest justification of the ordinary man and woman.

Our factory achievements have, in the main, been miraculous.

Most of those who talk of slackers are the people who do so as part of a plan to "Keep the workers under."

WHY NOT HAM FOR HOUSEWIVES?

● Although few housewives have been able to get any ham for more than a year, it still seems to be plentiful in restaurants, publichouses, snack bars and buffets.

But then this seems to be part of the strange Ministry of Food's decision that, while you have to have coupons for many kinds of food if you want to buy them for home use, most of these foodstuffs can be bought regularly without coupons in any restaurant or public eating-place which can obtain a supply.

I have never understood this. I myself eat away from home invariably, and I have been amazed at the fact that I could obtain quite easily whatever food I wanted so long as I did not eat more than two courses.

In the last war we had rationing in restaurants. And it worked. Why is it not imposed this time?

HOW CAN HITLER-WORSHIP GO ON?

● People outside Germany cannot understand why Hitler's ridiculous speeches can find any response even among his German dupes.

He still claims to have discovered documents "incriminating" foreign statesmen—Chamberlain, Churchill, and now Roosevelt. One after the other, he has attacked all three as being in the power of a Jewish gang which, of course, never existed.

You can only understand this credulity by trying to imagine yourself shut up in a prison cell for nearly ten years; being told only what your jailers would have you know; having suppressed from you every fact, every book and every idea that did not agree with those few facts; and hearing extolled, on every occasion, but never criticised, a few individuals.

Now if, when you entered the prison, your mind revolted against all this, it would eventually grow to accept anything and everything.

In spite of yourself, you would be mesmerised by the constant reiteration of something that at first sounded fatuous.

That has been, for years the position of every person in Germany. It is now the position of over 200,000,000 in the conquered lands.

HOW, NOW, CAN THE WAR BE SHORTENED?

● Bad as is the news from the Pacific—and it may yet be worse—there has at last come the chance of uniting for a common purpose, and blending into a great war machine, the four countries which are by far the four greatest in the world.

Difficulties confront a united war-front and a united factory-front. But they must be overcome.

Even greater problems are included in the choice of four men, one from each, to work out a plan of world strategy. But every hour wasted in refusing to face them may mean a day's prolongation of the war.

Our side's naval strength is twice that controlled by our enemies.

That is only one proof of the potential that can be called upon.

"United we stand . . ."

IRACLE

Pact of August,

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That would mean that the game would be lost to him in the West. We should be free to build up our war machine, batter his own, and strengthen our position in the Mediterranean and North Africa.

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THE ONLY ESCAPE FROM THE DILEMMA WAS TO SHIFT THE CENTRE OF GRAVITY TO THE PACIFIC.

He knew the strength of Japan better than we or America did, and he calculated that a sudden spring in the Pacific might save his apple-cart.

It would bring the United States in, but it was a gamble that might come off.

And Tojo's discovery that Roosevelt could no longer be bluffed encouraged him to take the plunge while our hands were full in the Mediterranean and while the United States Navy programme was far from complete.

Thus from the failure of Hitler's Russian gamble comes the gamble in the Pacific. It has had, and doubtless will still have, successes. They are the reward of treachery and surprise.

BUT TREACHERY AND SURPRISE DO NOT WIN WARS. IN SPITE OF THEM OUR ULTIMATE VICTORY IS MORE ASSURED TO-DAY THAN IT EVER WAS.

The Russian miracle precipitated Japan's stab in the dark. That stab in the dark has brought an infuriated America into the ring with a momentum and unity that nothing else could have provoked.

It is Hitler's last great gamble, and it seals his fate.

LIFTS THE LID

whatever food I wanted so long as I did not eat more than two courses.

In the last war we had rationing in restaurants. And it worked. Why is it not imposed this time?

HOW CAN HITLER-WORSHIP GO ON?

● People outside Germany cannot understand why Hitler's ridiculous speeches can find any response even among his German dupes.

He still claims to have discovered documents "incriminating" foreign statesmen—Chamberlain, Churchill, and now Roosevelt. One after the other, he has attacked all three as being in the power of a Jewish gang which, of course, never existed.

You can only understand this credulity by trying to imagine yourself shut up in a prison cell for nearly ten years; being told only what your jailers would have you know; having suppressed from you every fact, every book and every idea that did not agree with those few facts; and hearing extolled, on every occasion, but never criticised, a few individuals.

Now if, when you entered the prison, your mind revolted against all this, it would eventually grow to accept anything and everything.

In spite of yourself, you would be mesmerised by the constant reiteration of something that at first sounded fatuous.

That has been, for years the position of every person in Germany. It is now the position of over 200,000,000 in the conquered lands.

HOW, NOW, CAN THE WAR BE SHORTENED?

● Bad as is the news from the Pacific—and it may yet be worse—there has at last come the chance of uniting for a common purpose, and blending into a great war machine, the four countries which are by far the four greatest in the world.

Difficulties confront a united war-front and a united factory-front. But they must be overcome.

Even greater problems are included in the choice of four men, one from each, to work out a plan of world strategy. But every hour wasted in refusing to face them may mean a day's prolongation of the war.

Our side's naval strength is twice that controlled by our enemies.

That is only one proof of the potential that can be called upon.

"United we stand . . ."

One thing the people of this country—and our far-flung Commonwealth—are determined shall be ended is the muddle of aerodrome defence.

Our Airfields: Some Truths

By MAURICE FAGENCE

WE lost the aerodromes in Norway—and we lost Norway.

We lost the aerodromes in Greece—and we lost Greece.

We lost the aerodromes in Crete—and we lost Crete.

So we imagined that we had learned all there was to know about aerodrome defence by then.

We therefore announced that we had "learned the lesson of Crete."

Journalists were invited to come along and see for themselves that we should never lose aerodromes like that again.

They saw British machines pretending to be German and pretending to dive-bomb aerodrome machine-gunners who had no ammunition, anyhow!

Then they went back and wrote that if real ammunition had been used not an aeroplane would have survived.

And a fog of complacency settled over the land once more!

End this Nonsense!

Well, we continue true to form.

We lost the airfield of Khota Bharu, in Malaya—and we lost the *Prince of Wales*, the *Repulse*, and military advantages which cannot yet be assessed.

We lost the important air-base at Point Victoria, in Burma, and must wait to see what other losses go with it.

And, in between times, we let two escaped German airmen seize a British war machine from a home aerodrome—to be baulked only by shortage of petrol from getting back to Germany with it.

And now we are told again that we have "learned the lesson," and that new plans for aerodrome defence are being prepared which will confer equal responsibility on R.A.F. and Army alike.

The time has come to end the nonsense.

We have made similar announcements every time the loss of aerodromes has led us to the loss of new campaigns.

They have been followed by the loss of more aerodromes, more campaigns.

A new seizure by the enemy has usually come round about the time we are arguing where the military responsibility ends and the R.A.F. responsibility begins.

Always Too Late

The truth is that we keep learning the lesson that would have got us through the last crisis—not the one that will get us through the next.

We have always underrated the importance of aerodrome defence, forgetting that a landing-ground in Britain which it takes a year to build may well become in half an hour a Nazi base for an attack on the British Empire—unless adequately protected.

Yes, always. Let us go back a bit.

In October, 1937, when local authorities were getting innumerable applications from flying devotees for permission to build aerodromes, Lord Swinton, then Secretary of State for Air, wrote telling County Councils that "it was undesirable to plan our civil aerodromes on lines enabling them to be used for defence purposes."

Between then and the outbreak of war a lot of keen young men received air training which later enabled them to shoot Germans out of the skies.

Some enthusiasts had the temerity to ask for small subsidies, indicating that given a little help they could provide aerodromes that could be defended against a possible enemy.

But all they got from the Air Ministry was what is popularly called a flea in the ear.

War came. Our all-too-weak air striking forces were sent to France.

When the Germans made low-level attacks on their 'dromes, rifles and light machine guns were pushed into the hands of cooks, orderlies, storemen, etc.—some of them borrowed from neighbouring infantry units.

Official reports give stirring stories of how aerodromes were defended in this way—fine tributes to British courage, but monuments to ineptitude as well.

With time came the knowledge that we should do something better.

We appointed a director of ground defences—an R.A.F. appointment. He had ideas, and he tried hard to get them adopted.

Then, losing the aerodrome in Crete, we lost Crete as a logical consequence.

Couldn't Meet Brasshats

It was revealed that the man who had been in charge of ground defences for the R.A.F. had been handicapped in his task because the comparative lowness of his rank and lack of seniority had made it difficult for him to meet and get the necessary co-operation from the officers of high rank at the War Office!

To its credit the Air Ministry was thinking along the right lines.

It knew then what is very much clearer now—that the first line of defence of an aerodrome should be many scores, even hundreds, of miles beyond its boundaries.

But that calls for a wide measure of co-operation—and it couldn't get it.

So it put the job in the hands of somebody of higher rank—an Air Vice-Marshal.

His rank proved acceptable to Army brasshats. But he still failed to get due co-operation.

Some of the joint Army and R.A.F. camps formed in connection with this all-important work are torn by the most ridiculous jealousies. That didn't help him.

There were other mistakes.

When the Home Guard was first formed, JOHN BULL pointed out week after week that scores of thousands of artillerymen of the last war were not being used.

Six weeks ago the authorities woke up to the fact that these were the men you wanted to defend aerodromes.

Then there was that appeal for men up to 36 (up to 50 in the case of old soldiers) for aerodrome defence. Pay offered was very attractive: 3s. 3d. a day with one year's experience, 3s. 6d. with two.

It was announced that the appeal had fallen flat. Can you believe it? Can you imagine the men of Britain refusing to come forward for such an attractive form of fighting service, particularly with the rate of pay higher than in less attractive branches?

Perhaps the explanation lies in letters we received from readers who said they volunteered for this work, but found themselves pushed into non-combatant duties.

What is Needed

But the redress of all these mistakes is only a small part of the solution.

There has got to be an Aerodrome Defence Command, undivided by Service jealousies, led by men who will be unceremoniously bundled back into civilian life in disgrace if they fail in the task of defending the aerodromes.

What name it shall have doesn't matter a brass button.

It can be run in very close co-operation with the Anti-Aircraft Command—but it mustn't be under its orders or of any other command.

It must be a complete, self-contained command, taking all credit for its own successes, wholly and solely responsible to the country for its own failures.

It must not divide responsibility for aerodrome defence between R.A.F. and Army—which we still talk of doing in our very newest plans.

It must be in charge of everything from the middle gun of every aerodrome to the far-distant screen of fighter planes that are the first line of defence.

When the Nazis attack an aerodrome our fighter patrols have to be on the ground for 15 minutes out of every hour to refuel and re-arm.

Protective Screen

The advanced screens must be powerful enough to permit these all-important operations to proceed.

Ground "strafing" must be powerful enough to account quickly for any of the enemy that get through.

The Germans have had no such troubles in the defence of their aerodromes.

The term army ("Reichswehr") has ceased to mean anything in Germany. They write and speak of the armed forces ("Wehrmacht").

There is no need for co-operation between services, for there is only one service.

So it must be with us. And so it will be when we get that Aerodrome Defence Command.

And get it we must.

HELP TO WIN WITH WASTEPAPER

BRITAIN'S OWN BOOTLEGGERS

RACKETEERING in liquor, now such a vast business that the authorities are seriously alarmed, was first exposed in JOHN BULL.

Further investigations enable me to make some astonishing revelations.

Headed by a wealthy man who once held a prominent position in the licensing trade, a syndicate of men are making terrific profits from a widespread traffic in whisky, brandy and rum.

Their operations, carried out with the greatest skill and secrecy, originated in a meeting which took place at a London hotel nearly twelve months ago.

West End H.Q.

Two licensees who had had their premises bombed conceived the plan, and the principal arranged to finance it if the others put up agreed sums of money in proportion.

Headquarters were fixed in a disused shop and basement in the West End of London, and arrangements were made for stocks to be maintained in country garages, large empty houses in residential districts within easy reach of London, and in road-houses.

The owner of the premises charged an exorbitant rent, and as much as £20,000 worth of stock has been known to have existed at one time in that one establishment alone.

The syndicate commenced its scheme by "cornering" different brands of liquor.

With the aid of bombed-out licensees, it acquired big consignments through ordinary trade channels and kept them hidden away for the day when they knew there would be an acute scarcity.

Hotel proprietors and club owners, if willing to pay inflated prices, were actually taken to the syndicate's headquarters to see for themselves that the stocks existed, and once their cheques had been cleared orders were executed and the stuff taken away by lorry.

Nor were they content to stop at "cornering."

They added to their stocks by numerous devices.

They paid agents to scour country districts, where old stocks were in the cellars—and where, while the prices charged over the counter increased through taxation, the demand lessened—for the purpose of buying up all available supplies.

Price Quadrupled

One of their clients, in Cornwall, had a large quantity of champagne which had remained almost untouched for years.

It originally cost him about a pound a bottle, but the syndicate paid him 45s. for it—and resold it at 85s.!

Many out-of-the-way inns, up till a couple of months ago, sold the syndicate as many as fifty bottles of whisky and rum in one deal, at good profits to themselves, without realising how great the racket was slowly growing.

Some of the agents of this profiteering combine of publicans, ex-publicans and financiers were women, who have contributed to the success of the wangling in no small measure.

A typical instance of how these women worked can be illustrated by the exploits of one of them on a Saturday morning last September.

She left her house in North London, got into her car, and drove away to several small Kentish towns.

Stopping the car two or three dozen times, she entered every likely wine shop and public-house and bought as many bottles of whisky as she could get.

She told inquisitive sales-people that she had just taken a house in the neighbourhood and was giving a house-warming.

From one public-house she obtained eight bottles, and only laughed when the owner said he must charge her a pound a bottle!

The larger proportion of the whisky supplies originally obtained from different sources by this syndicate was bought up at the market wholesale price of 14s. 11d., and has been finally resold, after being carefully "nursed" for months, at an average of 25s. a bottle.

Brandy, to a lesser degree, was bought for as little as 29s. 9d. a bottle, and released at £3.

Stolen Consignments

Other racketeers, operating separately, deal in consignments obtained by robbery.

Several public-houses have been ransacked, and quite a number of lorries stolen and abandoned after their precious loads have been seized by thieves.

A publican in business only a few minutes away from my office was recently approached by a man who offered him about £200 worth of spirits at 22s. 6d. a bottle.

He reported the matter to the police, but the racketeer smelt a rat and failed to appear again.

Two hundred and fifty pounds was the price asked from another publican by men representing a smaller syndicate with headquarters in the City of London.

The publican was given an address at which the liquor could be inspected.

He, too, being honest, acquainted the police, who are now making inquiries.

Upwards of £100 worth of whisky, brandy and rum were stolen in the black-out about three weeks ago from an hotel in Bickley, Kent.

Thieves cut a small piece out of a window, near the latch, and cleared all the bar ledges and cupboards, but were disturbed before they had time to get into the cellar.

Forged Labels

One large firm of distillers is being badly victimised by still another type of racketeer.

For more than a year its empty bottles have been carefully collected in different parts of the country and its labels copied and forged.

You often hear of "watered" whisky, but there is no such thing. Water added to whisky sends it cloudy, and it can be easily detected.

A concoction of genuine whisky, however, of which about two-thirds is real, has been placed in these bottles with about a third raw spirit. Foil is then pressed over the capsules and the contents passed off in night clubs and by unscrupulous wine merchants at as much as 50s. a bottle!

The distilling firm to which I have alluded has received numerous complaints about the "dopey" nature of their alleged production, and the directors are not unreasonably angry.

Some of the lower kinds of drinking-clubs are selling liquor which has been manufactured by illicit stills. Two police officers tested some in a club a few evenings ago by dropping soda into it. It frothed up immediately like beer.

It is obvious that the time has come when the Home Office must take a more rigid interest in this grave problem.

I am determined that this growing ramp shall be thoroughly looked into, and, in addition to this exposure, intend to have the matter raised as soon as possible in the House of Commons.

The American liquor racket in prohibition days seemed fantastic to us—yet something unpleasantly like it is growing up in our midst to-day

PUBLIC BENEFACTOR

Mrs. A. Spencer, Oxford Avenue, Plymouth, has been awarded this week's guinea for sending me details of a C.O.D. racket.

Mark envelopes "Public Benefactor."

Sir Wyndham Childs' Comments

THEY PRINT RUBBISH ON VALUABLE PAPER

THE Waste Paper Recovery Association is doing a fine job, and doing it well. But it is unable to prevent certain forms of waste

I have a 12-paged pamphlet, three circulars, a leaflet, and a printed envelope, all issued by a religious charity seeking funds.

Constantly I receive queries about Youngson and Co., Home Work Specialists, of Newbald, York. The promoter is an old fee-snatcher criticised in JOHN BULL for years. He is able in these times to obtain the paper on which to print his balderdash.

One client has sent me an "Instruction Guide" (consisting of 12 pages, plus cover), a 14-paged catalogue, about 20 two-paged leaflets, a printed post-card, and a closely lined "Order Form and Trade Price List."

Then, also, there are the large amounts of paper used by promoters of seasonable lotteries.

And what about the so-called "publishers" who throw their blandishments at amateur authors? One reader has sent me a long "agreement," three circulars, and other waste-of-time literature that ought to be prohibited.

The Meanest Ministry of Them All

MEN of the Merchant Navy, to whose valour so many glowing tributes are paid, would like something a little more practical.

They don't mind risking their lives, but they do very much mind the way many of them are treated when they are disabled.

Worse still is the quibbling over compensation for their dependants.

There is the case of Apprentice Richard Groves, who, after heroic action at sea, left hospital suffering from the after-effects of forty-three wounds and exposure.

His pension was recently reduced from £3 1s. 8d. to 6s. 6d., and it was only after an outburst of public indignation that the Ministry of Pensions consented to review his case. The result has yet to be reported.

A Shameful Case

Then the pathetic case of a Whitby widow whose husband, Mr. Robert Barrett, had returned to the sea after many years ashore. He was boatswain on the Whitby steamer *Sneaton*, which was sent to the bottom by a torpedo.

Later he joined the steamer *Goathland*, which suffered the same fate. The crew spent four days in an open boat. They were bombed, machine-gunned and buffeted by gales, suffering terrible privations before they landed in Ireland.

Undaunted by these experiences, Barrett signed on as a member of a crew bringing over steamers bought in America.

His last ship was the *Empire Moon*, which made the Atlantic crossing in terrific weather. At times huge seas engulfed this little vessel. Barrett was caught by a heavy wave and was swept along the deck, but managed to save himself from being swept overboard.

Two days after the vessel docked at Birkenhead. Barrett struggled to carry on with his duties, but three days later was taken to hospital, where, within a few hours, he died.

Mrs. Barrett has been refused a pension on the quibble that his death was due to heart failure, although, quite naturally, she argued that he was twice torpedoed, and that his experiences on his last voyage hastened his death.

Where's the Generosity?

Yet only a few months ago Pensions Minister Sir Walter Womersley talked of "a generous scheme of compensation for those injured in these services by enemy action, and for pensions to widows and dependants of those who lost their lives."

"Pensions," he added, "*might* be paid to their widows and dependants in the case of death resulting from war injury or detention."

Why only "might" get a pension?

A nineteen-year-old youth from Gorleston lost his life on H.M. Trawler *Kingston Galena*. Previously he had taken part in the Dunkirk evacuation.

He gave his life in the service of the country, but his mother, in her sorrow, has suffered many indignities while endeavouring to secure a pension.

Officials have viewed her home and pried into her affairs, but no pension has been granted.

These men on the little ships suffer the constant danger of being torpedoed or bombed. They man the guns when their craft is attacked by dive-bombers.

To treat them and their dependants as if they were paupers applying for charity is a scandal which must be stopped.

A MODERN CHRISTMAS CAROL

"John Bull's" Ten-Minute Story

★

By WILL SCOTT

NO sooner did he get into the train than I nicknamed him (to myself, of course) Scrooge. He was the most disagreeable man I had seen for many a long day.

He climbed in, slammed the door, threw a small case on the luggage rack, sat down, sighed, and tapped his chest. He had a thin face, with a long, pink nose.

"Excuse me," said I, "but are we far from Lymminster?"

"Next station," said Scrooge. "About twelve minutes."

"Thanks," said I. "I'm new to the West Country, and with such tiny names on the stations, and the bad light, it isn't easy to tell where we are."

"Next station," Scrooge repeated. "About twelve minutes."

The farther into the west the train went, the higher climbed the hills and the lower fell the clouds, until now at last they met, and a grey screen seemed to shut in the train on all sides half a mile away. Still, with twinkling lights here and there (for it wanted some little time to black-out), it certainly looked seasonable; and, to make conversation, I said so.

"Seasonable!" said Scrooge.

"Christmassy," said I. "I mean the look of it. Considering there's a war on and everything."

He snorted. There was no doubt about it—it was a genuine snort.

"I mean," I added, to brighten him up a bit, "that in normal times we should be saying that this is just the weather we wanted at this time of the year. We should be looking forward to Christmas numbers and cards, and buying the holly and a tree, and probably the ticket collector at Lymminster would have a sprig of mistletoe in his cap——"

"Bah!" said Scrooge.

"I beg your pardon!" said I surprised.

"Bah!" said Scrooge, even louder.

"What about?" I asked.

"Christmas," said he.

"Oh!" said I.

HE tapped his chest again, and looked more miserable than ever.

"Not feeling well?" I inquired.

"Dyspepsia," said he.

I sympathised, although, to be sure, I didn't like the fellow—or at least I didn't like his outlook.

"Worry," he said suddenly.

"Worry?" said I.

"That's what's done it," said he.

"Ah!" said I. "These are worrying times for all of us."

He groped in a pocket and pulled out a little glass bottle. Unscrewing the cap, he extracted two small pellets, which he popped into his mouth.

"They'll do the trick," he said.

I looked at the label on the bottle which he held out for my inspection. *Hugo's Dyspepsia Tablets* was the inscription.

He slipped the bottle back into his pocket, rubbed his nose, and stared out through the frosted windows.

Then, turning to me, he said suddenly:

"Christmas be damned!"

He *was* an unpleasant man.

"Fat lot to look forward to *this* Christmas," he snarled.

And from that he went on to abuse this particular Christmas so heartily that all I wanted was to get away from the man and into brighter company. He was terrible. Therefore I muttered something and made my way into the corridor and a little farther down the train. Where I got another surprise.

A couple of stations previously half a dozen men had come aboard. I had put them down as war workers in some factory, going home, perhaps, to Lymminster, the county town. And here they were now, two or three compartments from Scrooge, noisy and happy, but (I thought) quite as odd in their way as Scrooge himself.

I stood in the corridor, outside their partly opened door, and listened to what they had to say. I couldn't help it.

"A turkey for me," said one.

"I'm down," said another, "for a Christmas pudding and two dozen mince-pies."

"Mine's a goose," said a third.

"Mine's a turkey—like Joe," said a fourth.

"Leg o' pork for me!"

"Goose here!"

"I'm on the fancy side. *My* order is half a dozen boxes of Christmas crackers."

"Same here. Except that I'm down for a whacking great tree, and all the twiddley bits that go on it."

I COULDN'T believe the evidence of my ears!

The third Christmas of the war—and here was this bunch of men calmly talking of the things they were ordering for Yuletide as if we had suddenly slipped back to 1938 and nothing had happened in the world since then.

My amazement must have been plain on my face, for one of the men, looking round, caught sight of me through the window, and it was easy to tell that he knew what I was thinking.

He grinned, and pushed the door back.

"It's not as bad as it sounds," he said, half in an apologetic tone.

After which there was nothing for it but to take the vacant seat in the corner.

"It's just an idea we've got in Lymminster," said my new friend. "A war time idea. And a good one, too, I think. Of course, all these things you heard us mentioning we can't buy—not this year, at all events."

"I *thought*...." said I.

"Christmas-trees and the things that go on them, Christmas crackers, mince-pies by the dozen! No, not this year. But," added the man, "in normal times that's just how we'd be spending our money now. So this year we're all going to spend it *without*."

"Without what?" I asked, not understanding.

"Without getting the things," said the man. "We've opened a fund, and all we get is going to war charities and things like that. For instance, me. In normal times I'd be giving eighteen bob for a turkey. This year, no. But I'm giving the eighteen bob just the same. It won't cost me any more than other years—only, of course, I shan't get the

"Fat lot to look forward to this Christmas!" he snarled

turkey. I shall get a receipt-card, with a picture of a turkey in the corner. Jim, there, will get a card with two dozen mince-pies in the corner, and his receipt underneath. Get the idea?

"It's a good idea," said I.

"It's a perfect idea," said he. "Lymminster's Christmas-shopping mad just now. You ought to see them round the office of the fund. You can't get near. Turkeys, geese, legs of pork, Christmas puddings, mince-pies—they're going as fast as the clerks can make out the receipts. And not a thing sold. *My* Christmas dinner will be bread and cheese, I suppose, but the receipt for the eighteen-bob turkey will be up in the middle of the mantelpiece—where the Christmas cards used to be."

"It's a grand idea," I admitted.

"We can't have a Christmas like we used," said he, "but at least we can pretend—and the money goes where it's wanted."

We were running into Lymminster now. I went back into the corridor and along to my own compartment for my hat and things. Scrooge had the window down and the door half open. As the train stopped, he jumped out and hurried along the platform without saying good-bye.

THEN came my little accident. The jerk of the halting train flung the door back and caught my hand and made a gash in it a few inches long. I climbed out, wrapped a handkerchief round the wound, and asked the ticket collector where I might find a chemist's.

"On the right, up in the square," he said.

I walked up a short hill to the little town, found the square, and saw, on one side of it, an old-fashioned chemist's shop with the name *Hugo* above.

"Hugo?" I thought. "Now where have I heard that name before?"

I went in—and behind the counter was Scrooge.

"So this is where you are!" I said. "I've had a little disagreement with the train door. I wonder if you could dress it for me."

AFTER looking at the wound he got busy, being no more cheerful about it than he had been about other matters on the train. When he was near the end of his task, I raised the matter of Lymminster's Imitation Christmas Dinner Fund.

"Rather a natty idea I thought it," said I.

"Natty?" said Hugo Scrooge.

"Well—all this money spent on pies and puddings and turkeys and geese, and yet——"

"Bah!" he said. Just as he had done on the train.

He took my money, brought me my change, and tapped his chest. Then again he produced his little bottle of *Hugo's Dyspepsia Tablets* and popped two in his mouth.

"It's chronic to-day," he said mournfully. "All this worry; that's what's doing it."

He held up the little bottle and stared at it.

"In normal times," he said, "on the morning after Boxing Day, I should reckon to sell anything up to three hundred bottles of these, at two-and-three the bottle. This year I shan't sell a one!"

He poked the bottle back in his pocket and sniffed.

"Christmas be damned!" he said.

And turned away.

Human Machine

DO YOU THINK YOU COULD DO IT?

● In one of his books the late P. C. Wren spoke of a man who had "acquired the controlled immobility, the reflective self-withdrawal of the desert Arab; the power to sit wrapped in thought, a power and a gift much more rare than is supposed.

"How many Europeans," he asks, "can sit and really think for many consecutive minutes — and, by thought, I don't mean the vacuous state that is the opposite of thought, mere idle empty-mindedness?"

It is, indeed, a much harder job than most people imagine; and if you think differently—well, just start to think out some problem or other and see how many seconds you can do it, let alone minutes, without a single irrelevant idea crossing your mind!

G. K. Chesterton made his immortal character, Father Brown, do some real thinking in his story, "The Honour of Israel Gow."

Investigating the life and death of the Earl of Glengyle, Father Brown and his friends find in the castle (a) A hoard of diamonds, loose, without any settings; (b) heaps of loose snuff; (c) little heaps of steel wheels and tiny springs; and (d) lots of wax candles, but no candlesticks.

"By no stretch of fancy," says someone, "can the human mind connect together snuff and diamonds and wax and loose clockwork."

But Father Brown could. He linked them together in several ways.

Can you?

Try it and see. It's a good test!

STRANGER THAN FICTION

EVENTS only seem to pass away.

You know how, when you sleep, things that seem meaningless rise, like fish in a still pool, and make ripples in your imagination, so that in your dream-world big things become small, and half-forgotten trivialities loom large.

Time is like that—a vast sleeping consciousness, out of which bob the dreams that make up World History. But everything that happens leaves its mark on our destiny.

All the huge libraries man ever accumulated record nothing but disjointed fragments of things as they really happened.

Our Complete History of the World is nothing but a shard of a great smashed mirror: it reflects only a corner of the whole story.

We, trying to look on Man, are like Peeping Toms prying into a large, dim, secret room through a pinhole. We must content ourselves with the little that passes in the limited field of our vision.

We are destined never to know the whole truth. We are only men. Great events happen under our noses.

But, preoccupied with the small things of everyday life, we do not see them.

About one thousand nine hundred and forty years ago a big, dark, red-faced man in the licensed victualling business stood by his counter and talked to a little group of regular customers.

"Of course," he was saying, "all this means more trouble. . . ." Then he looked furtively from side to side, and said: "Taxes. It goes from bad to worse.

Going to the Dogs

"In the old days, you could get a living. There's no use talking—the country is going to the dogs.

"Yes, I don't mind saying it aloud: the country's finished. Something'll have to be done. Otherwise we face ruin. It stands to reason.

"It's all very well for the Emperor to talk. 'Tax the whole world,' says Augustus. Just like that. But where is the money coming from? And, of course, they have to start here. I'm sick and tired of taxes, taxes, taxes! Bah!"

A smaller man with a straggling greyish beard—a rather drunken little fellow whose eye was already bleary, although the evening was not far advanced—said to the innkeeper:

"You should worry, Matthias! All you publicans do 's grumble. But look at it this way: Cæsar taxes the whole world. All right. *Hic!* All right. *Hic!* (What do you fake up this wine with, Matt? What an old crook you are!) Taxes.

"Well, that means a general censorship—*hic*—I mean, census. Not censorship: census. And this town is one of the centres. Is it or is it not? It is. Very well, then. There's a constant in-*hic*-influx of all sorts of pe-people from all round.

"Your pub is full. You raise the prices three hundred per-*hic!* You charge like the devil. The census-taking lasts ages. You fill your till. So what are you grumbling about?"

"You're drunk, Jochanaan," said the innkeeper. "Fill my till! Don't make me laugh.

"The exports are killing my business. And as for rooms. Well, if I had a thousand rooms to let, I might make money out of them, but what accommodation have I got? Get out of it, you and your drunken nonsense!"

Another man said: "But look at the prices you charge for the rooms you have got."

"Sir," said the stranger. "I am looking for a room for my wife and myself

SILENT NIGHT: HOLY NIGHT

★

BY WALDO KELLAR

"Ain't I got to *live?*" asked the innkeeper.

At this point an old man came in. He was travel-stained and tired. His face was seamed with age and care, but upon it there hung an air of gentleness and dignity.

He raised in salute a large brown hand—the gnarled, strong-thumbed hand of a skilled worker—and said: "Peace be unto you."

"Unto you be peace. And what can I do for you?" asked the innkeeper.

"Sir," said the stranger, "I am looking for a room for my wife and myself."

"You've got some hopes," said the innkeeper.

"It is very necessary," said the old man. "I have little money. But some room—any room, anywhere—any kind of shelter, if only for to-night, just this one night of all nights. I will pay."

"There is just one kind of room," said the innkeeper. "Not a proper room, but—well, speaking as man to man, it's the stable. But—accommodation is dear, and business is bad, and what with the taxes. . . ."

The old man held out a small silver coin. His hand trembled a little. The innkeeper shrugged. "What do you think this is?" he asked. "There's a census on! It'll cost you rather more than that, my friend."

A Generous Impulse

The old man found another silver coin. "This is all the money I have," he said. "If you will take this, well and good. But I have no more." And he shrugged in resignation.

"You're ruining me," said the innkeeper, "but all right. I'm robbing my wife and children—but you can have the stable. And mind you don't set the straw alight.

"A lot of people would charge you extra for the use of that straw. Straw costs a fortune, now. Still, I'm a fool to myself. Any wine?"

"I have no more money," said the old man.

The innkeeper hesitated, his hand on a wine-skin. For a second, a generous impulse struggled with cupidity; and won. "Here," he said, handing the visitor a cup of rough red wine. "And mind you bring the cup back."

The old man bowed to the floor in gratitude, and then hurried out, murmuring his thanks.

"That's the kind of fellow I am," said the innkeeper.

"Yeah," murmured the drunken one. "Charge the poor old fe-feller the price of the whole stable for one night's lodging—and then gi-give him a farthing's worth of the worst wine in the house—and your best is pretty bad."

"I never knew him give even that much away before," grunted the third man. "He must be making his fortune here."

"Bah," said the innkeeper. "You don't know what I have to put up with. Only to-day, a man comes in, and he orders food and wine, and then—ah, ah! Who's this?"

It was a shepherd, hairy as a bear and as bulky in his heavy sheepskin cloak—a fierce figure of a man, with a strung bow over his shoulder and a large, well-used knife on his thigh.

"Where is the King?" he asked, and there was a dazed look in his eyes. "The King? Where is the King?"

With heavy irony, the innkeeper replied: "Herod doesn't stay here, you know. Or perhaps you mean Cæsar Augustus? Well, he doesn't stay here, either. Try Rome."

The shepherd went out, shaking his head. The innkeeper said: "They go elsewhere to get drunk, and come here to talk nonsense—that's what I have to put up with."

Dressed Like Noblemen

"Less have some more wine," said Jochanaan, with another hiccup. "All round. I'll pay. Full measure, you crook-crook—*hic!*"

More people came in. The landlord's wife came out to assist him. A couple of girls danced with tambourines, and three Roman soldiers, old soldiers, their chins covered with callouses from the rubbing of their helmet-straps, began to quarrel.

A newcomer said: "Funny thing—as I was coming in just now I saw three gents, real toffs, coming up the road. Foreigners of some sort.

"All the kids were staring at 'em. But they were dressed up like noblemen—silks, satins, jewels, everything."

"If necessary," said the innkeeper, "I'll give them my own room."

Jochanaan stuttered: "They'll need to be kings to pay the prices you'll charge 'em for that. . . ."

The night was passing. People came, and then went. The room became quiet. The landlord yawned. He had worked hard, and the fumes of all the wine he had served seemed to fill his head.

Soon, only the drunken Jochanaan was left, and the two dancers. One of them went to the door and looked out. "Hey," she said, "that's strange. There's a star overhead that I never noticed before."

Outside, a great tumult of voices rose. "Another riot?" said the innkeeper. People were singing in wild ecstasy. The innkeeper looked over the dancer's shoulder. The night was dark. He could not see those who sang. The star blazed with a pure white light.

The innkeeper said: "Stars won't pay my rent and taxes. Get going. I'm closing for the night."

ARE YOU SAVING YOUR WASTEPAPER?

What if Broken?

★ Good resolutions are good in themselves, even if they are broken later. Periodical new beginnings serve to keep us all up to concert pitch

Says HUMANIST

THERE are two occasions in the year (said Charles Lamb) when we all feel the need to take stock of ourselves and to make a new beginning. On New Year's Day and on our birthday.

One reader has been writing about the futility of making good resolutions.

I used to make about a dozen every New Year's Eve (*he says*), and I set them out on the first page of my diary. The idea was to read them every morning to keep myself up to scratch.

The first usually went west about the third day. Nearly half of them were broken inside the week. By the end of January nothing was left.

This happened time after time until I came to the conclusion that it was a foolish effort and dropped it. I imagine that the majority of people have had the same sort of experience.

I think we should be happier if we accepted ourselves for what we are, and stopped trying to be different. What do you say?

The first thought that strikes me about this young man is that he made far too many resolutions. If he had concentrated on one or two he might have been more successful.

Again, why should it be argued that the making of good resolutions is a waste of effort—even though they are broken? One might as well argue that it is useless to tune a piano because it gets out of tune again.

If a man makes no effort at self-improvement he is apt to get steadily worse. Periodical new beginnings serve to keep him up to concert pitch.

HERE is an example of what I mean. It comes from a man of fifty:—

Maybe mine is a funny problem to send to Humanist. I have had a most varied life—soldier, airman, engineer, underground fitter in the mines, and a few years at sea. Still going strong. Got a wife and family, all happy.

My trouble is cursing in all places, at work and in the home. As soon as I get a bit excited or angry I curse. I am often sorry afterwards.

I suppose it dates back to the last war, when as a sergeant I used to let it rip.

My wife says: "Oh, don't, please. At your age you ought to know better, and it's not nice for the family."

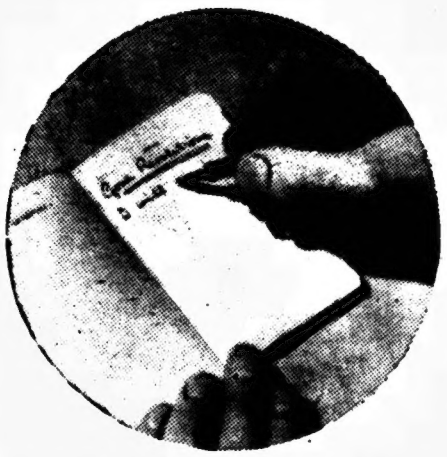
She is right, I know, but it takes a lot of breaking off in times like these. Still, I am willing to try. What do you advise?

The habit of a lifetime cannot be uprooted in a day, but nevertheless I do recommend a New Year resolution on the subject. Some men have cured themselves by a system of self-imposed fines, the proceeds to be handed over to the wife.

Jack Warner's use of the words "blue pencil" as a substitute for an oath might be helpful in the early stages!

Years ago men used to refrain from swearing in the presence of ladies. They would do so to-day if the ladies showed displeasure. But a young officer assures

they are



me that he hears more cursing in an office full of women workers than he does in the Army.

But the words are often meaningless. They are not intended to be blasphemous. They are little more than a method of emphasis. In nine cases out of ten they are unnecessary, and they are often due to a poor vocabulary.

If a man uses the most violent language to express mild annoyance he is left speechless when a more serious problem arises. The most powerful and impressive language is entirely clean.

AND now I want to make room for a letter on the subject of dreams, which came to me recently. The writer is the mother of a young man who was lost on H.M.S. *Hood*.

On May 21 (*she says*) I dreamt I was at my childhood's home, where we used to watch the River Severn come up till it splashed over the wall at the bottom of the garden. I looked through the window and saw a huge ship tossing in a rough sea. Her bows came up out of the water and I saw her sink.

Two nights later I dreamt again of being in the same place. I saw my son there with a pal. They were throwing bottles across the road. I woke at 2 a.m. Falling asleep again, I saw my son with his little girl friend. He looked terribly sad, but did not speak. The dream haunted me all next day.

On that day I heard of the loss of the *Hood*, and for weeks I could not sleep properly. I was searching for my boy in my dreams, and could not rest.

Several weeks later I saw my son again. He did not speak, but his face looked so peaceful and happy. Since that time I have slept without a dream.

I try not to grieve for him, as I promised I would not do so if such a thing happened. I feel happy about him now, as I am sure he is at rest and not fretting for this life.

It is not easy to dismiss such a story as a coincidence. The part of the letter I like best is near the end: the promise which the mother gave that she would try not to grieve for him if he died for his country. It must have been terribly hard to make that promise.

It was even harder to keep such a promise—but the mother is keeping it faithfully, as are many other mothers of brave lads risking their lives on land, at sea and in the air.

May Heaven comfort them all.

GUINEAS FOR READERS

Every week HUMANIST tackles a post-bag of human problems, and he will help you if you are in doubt. Write to him at 93, Long Acre, London, W.C.2. You will receive a guinea if your letter is quoted on this page (without, of course, giving your name).

★ If you have a letter with a good adventure story we may use it at greater length with payment at higher rates. 10s. 6d. for all other letters published. Service letters are returned. Address: "Voice," JOHN BULL, 93, Long Acre, London, W.C.2.

VOICE of the TROOPS

CHRISTMAS again—the third Christmas at war.

The hearts of millions of people at home will be far away from their firesides this year.

They will be hundreds, thousands of miles away, where the Christmas landscape is of sun-baked deserts, storm-tossed seas, temples and pagodas shimmering in the heat.

What will our boys be doing? This week's letters make it easier for you to be with them in thought and spirit.

Our lads imprisoned in the German camp Stalag XXI D are going to have Christmas entertaining and boxing—and a concert provided by their own band. Gunner Underwood writes to his parents at Martin Road, Slough, Bucks:

Our entertainment will come out of the 10 pfennigs a head we pay weekly.

We are making advances to the fellows who have to buy false teeth, spectacles, etc. We are giving extra luxuries to those of our pals who are in hospital.

Also we are giving small sums of money to those who have been injured at work, enabling them to buy cigarettes.

A committee of ten will look after things. I am one of them.

We have bought twenty band instruments, stage effects for plays, and equipment for indoor sports such as boxing, table-tennis, and so on.

I am afraid space doesn't permit me to give you a complete picture, but you will see from these bare details how we endeavour to help ourselves.—Albert.

★ ★ ★

NEVER SEEN SNOW!

Flying Cadet Field, whose parents live at Hopefield Road, Leicester, will spend part of his Christmas throwing pals into a pond!

His most recent letter from Florida, U.S.A.—where he is one of many British boys qualifying to get his R.A.F. Wings—tells why:

Had my first solo flight to-day. Had a lot of fun afterwards.

It is the practice to throw into the pond after tea all the men who have had their first solo that day, complete with clothes.

As a rule there should only be about four in the water, but you usually find about twenty. This is because the throwers-in often get chucked in as well.

We shan't have a white Christmas here. One of our instructors has lived in Florida all his life and has never seen snow yet. It is quite amusing explaining to local people what snow feels like!

We'll be having iced drinks brought to us by coloured waiters.—Stan.

★ ★ ★

COLLIES ARE HUMAN

By contrast, Private W. E. Cook (13058968) will spend his Christmas in one of the wildest and loneliest parts of the Outer Hebrides, where a few crofters' cottages are the only habitations for miles round.

He sends home a description of a night in such surroundings:

I was invited by a crofter to spend an enjoyable evening in his lonely home. He had a collie dog, Floss, used for rounding up sheep and shaggy cattle.

It was so dark when I left that I could only walk against the gigantic wind with my shoulders pressed down. Then, suddenly, I fell 15 ft. over a cliff on to the beach below.

My ankle was badly damaged. Every movement sent flashes of pain up my leg. The wind carried my shouts out to sea. The sea crept up to within a few feet of me, and the gale blew it all over me.

I hoped and prayed that the sergeant would miss me and send out a search party that would hear my voice.

Then, after two terrible hours, I heard barking on the cliff top. Floss was there. She kept racing from the cliff to the cottage and back, barking all the time.

She told them plainly that something was wrong. Soon I was hauled up by a rope and taken to hospital.

Floss had dogged me to make sure I was safe. They are more than animals. They are human, those collies. And now I intend to be the biggest scrounger of cookhouse bones in the Army.—W.

GUY FAWKES NIGHT!

Petty Officer Morrison, of H.M.S. "Penelope," hopes to get "a spot of shore leave" for Christmas. But if he does, remembering what happened the last occasion he had time off, he'll be waiting all the time for a recall to duty.

He writes to his sister at Carnoustie, Angus, N.B.:

I was having an afternoon tea and dance and just settling down to an enjoyable evening when we were recalled for Captain Agnew's great attack on the Italian convoys.

We felt disgusted—until we knew we were in for such a glorious show. Then we wouldn't have missed it for a pension.

We were literally surrounded by burning ships, that lit up the sea for miles round. One ship, an ammunition carrier, went up in one colossal flash. A tanker was blazing like a gigantic torch.

What better way of spending Christmas than another Guy Fawkes' night like that?—Willie.

* * *

CLOUDS DOWN BELOW

Meanwhile, with the Japanese attacking Burma, let Private Winstanley, who is serving in that country, tell you (via a letter to his sister at Luton Road, Hull) what Christmas should be like in that new theatre of war:

We'll have thick jungle all round us. You can't escape that. And wild animals. A leopard was shot against the cookhouse the other night.

Ten to one we'll be in queer bamboo huts lit by oil lamps. The one we're in now is on a steep hill, and, as they don't make the floor level whatever the slope of the ground, you've a good chance of rolling into a heap.

Such are the hills that you usually look down to see the clouds out here. And as for route marching—you get the impression, toiling up the steep roads, that this world has no roof to it.—Ernie.

* * *

ONE FAMILY REUNION

But Mr. and Mrs. D. Fletcher, of 38, Heather Road, Smethwick, won't care what the scenery is like out in the Libyan desert where their two sons are fighting.

Their mental picture will be of the two lads together at last. A letter from one, a lance-corporal who has been out there two years, tells of his meeting with his younger brother, newly arrived:

Well, mum, I couldn't put our feelings down on paper when we met in such strange surroundings after so long away from each other. We just stood there holding hands and looking at each other and not saying a word, not knowing whether to laugh or cry. I think a tear did come into my eyes.

Then, when we did talk, we talked so much that all the fellows round did the laughing.

READERS' VIEWS IN A SENTENCE

"TAKE your food with you"—urged on rail travellers by the railway companies, buffet and restaurant cars having been removed from service—means one thing. Civilians will be able to take food with them; Service men, having no cupboards on which to draw, will go hungry.—Leslie T. Mutum, Aldeburgh, Suffolk.

* * *

Six young officers (my brother was one) attended a court-martial as students, and were asked by the President afterwards: "What sentence would you have given?" Answers varied from three days confined to barracks to six months' hard labour!—C. B., Market Harborough, Leicestershire.

* * *

Indignant comment of eight-year-old boy who, offering a shilling to a Santa Claus in charge of the lucky-dip, received a cardboard article worth a penny in exchange: "Father Christmas wants reporting. He's profiteering."—Mrs. Sims, Seven Sisters Road, N.7.

* * *

Non-members buying from Co-ops have no number, therefore get no dividends on purchase. But Dunfermline Co-op Society has given Russia a number—and, by quoting it, you can ensure that any dividend will go to help our gallant ally.—John B. Ewan, Beatty Place, Dunfermline.

CHRISTMAS

CHRISTMAS never fails us, though with War the World may shake, but we still remember Christmas for a little Child's sweet sake. And naught mankind can ever do can quench the Holy Ray, that shone above a Baby's Head Who in a Manger Lay.

CHRISTMAS never fails us, its Message brings us all the Sacred Love of Family Life held in the Tender Thrall of One Who came to save us, and to show the Way of Life, its joys, its hopes, its Peace, which will outlast all temporal strife.

CHRISTMAS never fails us, so wherever we may be, *let us fill our hearts with Hope and Faith, on land, in air, at sea. Let us pray for those who love us, and for those we love, and friends, and may God Bless our Christmas Prayer with the Love that CHRISTMAS SENDS.* J. M.

BEECHAM'S POWDERS

are doing

FINE WORK!

says Chemist and First-Aid Worker in Big Factory

2½d

ENDS VICTORY WORKERS' 'FLU COLDS CHILLS PAIN FATIGUE

***Beecham's Powders** are playing their part!*

Mr. A. E. (M.P.S.), a Qualified Chemist and First-Aid Worker in one of our big factories, writes:—

"First-Aid Rooms and Rest Rooms ought all to have these powders as part of their equipment. Beecham's Powders are doing fine war work in this factory and must have contributed enormously to the increase in production."

Beecham's Powders cost only 2½d. each, but the relief they bring is worth more than gold. *Owing to their Special powder form they are QUICKER ACTING and MORE CERTAIN in results!* Get your supply **NOW!!**

Prices in Gt. Britain (Incl. Purchase Tax)
Cartons of 6 Powders 1/4d.
Single Powders 2½d. each.

BEECHAM'S POWDERS 2½

PHOSFERINE wards off depression

—says this student

"I have been taking Phosferine Tablets," *says N.U., a Birmingham student,* "and find that they give me greatly increased vitality and nervous energy. They are very effective in warding off depression which my work as a student tends to develop. I regard Phosferine as a necessary standby for the maintenance of good health."

Ten drops or two tablets of Phosferine make a capital antidote to brain-fag. Succeeding doses will build up a reserve of energy and strength.

Why not give Phosferine a trial?

PHOSFERINE

TABLETS OR LIQUID, 1/4, 3/3, & 5/4

(Including Purchase Tax)

Two Tablets equal ten drops of Liquid. The 3/3 size is nearly four times the 1/4 size, you save 2/-.

PLEASE GO EASY

with the

MARMITE

(Registered Trade Mark)

EYES IN THE BLACKOUT

Some odd, unexpected little talents Doctor Carrot possesses. Not only does he entertain you at mealtimes, giving savour to your sweets and sweetness to your savouries, but he can actually—did you know?—help you to see better in the blackout. Meet Doctor Carrot: you'll like him.

Here's a recipe that will be new to most British housewives:

Boston Bake

Soak 2 breakfastcupfuls small white beans in cold water for 24 hours. Put into a stew-jar with 3 ozs. diced fat bacon, and 1 lb. sliced carrots. Mix thoroughly 1 level teaspoonful dry mustard and 1 tablespoonful golden syrup with enough hot water to make ½ pint. Pour over beans, and add enough water to cover. Put on lid, and bake in moderate oven for 2 to 2½ hours. For the last-half hour remove the lid, and bring some of the bits of bacon to the top to brown off. Delicious!

C5

THE LAST LAUGH

S. N. (Highgate).—"The Timber Control has stopped wood supplies for the manufacture of cotton reels." Playful kittens have accepted this decision in a sporting spirit.

W. G. (Harlington). — "You should just hear what some of my pals call the sergeant-major." And we have a good idea what the sergeant-major calls them.

T. V. (Rochester).—"The man next door is a boxer, and sometimes I hear him playing the piano. His bass chords are very loud." Perhaps he forgets to take off his boxing-gloves.

D. S. (Rawtenstall).—"I have just had a year's shave from one blade." True economy. We must admit we have never let our stubble go for so long.

W. N. (Hildenborough).—"Once, when visiting the Fiji Islands, I addressed a crowd of natives on the beach and a coconut fell from a tree and stunned me." Nature knows best.

E. M. (Berkhamsted). — "The public is warned about the pilfering of milk from doorsteps." The police discredit the theory that this is the work of a gang of cat burglars.

A. W. (Gillingham).—"At a concert I am always willing to give up my seat to a real lover of music." So long as there is room at the buffet?

O. T. (Richmond).—"I once had my portrait painted in a novel skating pose." How many sittings did it take?

R. C. (Ulverston).—"The Ministry of Health has started a campaign urging people with colds to protect their neighbours from the germs." Apparently nothing is being done to protect the sufferers from colds from the pest who always has a certain cure.

S. L. (Sutton).—"He temporarily lost his memory and told the police that the last thing he remembered was finishing his breakfast at home, and then an hour or two later he was surprised to find himself sitting in a railway carriage." It would surprise any railway passenger to find himself sitting.

OLD BILL: By Bruce Bairnsfather

"While it's Christmas 'ere, I suppose it's just about August Bank 'Oliday where you comes from"

E. L. (Guildford). — "Ladies' handbags with locks are on the market." A very wise precaution with schoolgirl complexions the price they are.

B. H. (Warlingham). — "Short comedians are the funniest." Tall comedians can be funny, too. What many listeners dislike are B.B.C. comics who are too broad.

G. C. (Cheltenham).—"My son has been studying for a very long time, and I am beginning to wonder what he will be when he has passed his final exams." Quite an old man, we should imagine.

T. P. (Launceston).—"I am anxious to find a job for a dwarf in whom I am interested. Will you suggest what I can do with him?" Well, you might get him posted under a tobacconist's counter to hand up supplies to the shopkeeper for regular customers.

D. N. (Mexborough).—"A man should be satisfied if he can get his daughter off his hands at an early age." Unless, of course, he has to keep her husband on his feet.

Side-Slips

EVENING DISPATCH (EDINBURGH): "It appears that a tramcar was involved in a collision with the rear end of the vehicle, which was loaded with empty and FATAL biscuit tins."

THE LEADER:—"In fact, one old Welsh MARE pulling her weight on the land was a COLT in the Boer War!"

DAILY EXPRESS: — "All the PATENTS are now convalescent."

GREATEST OF THESE

● The father of baby Joan, a discharged soldier, urgently needs your help. Only twenty-three years of age, he has suffered all his life with bronchitis and asthma, although prior to the war his general health began to improve.

He was passed Grade 1, but sleeping on cold floors and strenuous Army life caused this young man to collapse after three days' intensive training. After several weeks in hospital he was discharged.

Save for a little temporary work, he has been unemployed for seven months, and has therefore had no chance of regaining health and strength. Mr. and Mrs. Rush and their baby are existing on 30s. a week from P.A.C., plus National Health Insurance, which will shortly be reduced.

His doctor orders him to have all his teeth extracted, but he is afraid to follow that advice until he can see his way to pay for an artificial set.

Both he and his wife are badly in need of warm underclothing for the winter.

We hold an excellent reference from the vicar of the church where he attends.

Please earmark your donations "Asthma," or for our General Fund, and address them to the Secretary, JOHN BULL War Sufferers' Fund, 93, Long Acre, London, W.C.2.

Acknowledgments are sent where names are given, and lists of subscriptions are kept at this office. A copy of the current week's will be sent on application.

There are no deductions for administration expenses.

We are grateful to those who send to us anonymously.

Result of "BULLETS" 1,302

FIRST PRIZE £50.

E. A. Jackson, 68, Kendal St., Barrow-in-Furness.
Example: BOYS OF PEACE
Bullet: COMING HOME? CHRISTMAS ROCKY!

£20: T. Richards, 12, Downs St., Clydach, Swansea.
Example: For Christmas
Bullet: "Tunnels" Won't "Have Trains."

£10: E. W. Lindwell, 7, Zion Place, Gravesend, Kent.
Example: Hunt Your
Bullet: Blood, Toil And—"Sweets"?

£5: J. H. Cole, 64, Derbyshire Rd., Fleetwood.
Behind The Scenes—Frustrating "Villains"—"Axe," Woollen!

£4: T. E. Wyatt, 196, King Edward's Rd., Birmingham.
Fair Shares—For Children, World's "Oranges"?

£3: L. Thorpe, 206, Manchester Rd., Denton, Manchester.
Too Much Play—And "War Machine" Wobbles.

£2: S. Francis, 275, Manchester Rd., Audenshaw, Manchester.
People Who Sue—Always By Gum, Sues.

20s.: J. F. McLaughlin, 113, Wall St., Cameron, Pollok.
Man In Khaki—Has "Wealth" Of Pockets!

20s.: H. Warner, Upper Winchendon, nr. Aylesbury, Bucks.
People Who Grab—"Orange-blossom"—"Lemons" Missing "Pieces."

20s.: Mrs. A. Brunton, Atwick, Driffield, E. Yorks.
Heard To Hunt Talk—Daily—Dad's Purchased Him!

27s.: G. V. Munro, 6, Corberry Terrace, Dumfries, Scotland.
In Santa's Stocking—"Cramming" Made "Bumbleton" Joyful

20s.: W. A. Geddes, Killylaugh, Belfast.
Superwoman Effect—And Borrell's Bugle Spreaded!

Xmas Dinner Award with 3 Child Prizes above.

A list of 3 Winners of £5s. and 80 Winners of Xmas Cakes can be seen at these offices. The 1,000 Merit Awards have also been posted.

35 XMAS PRIZES

WON IN JUWORD No. 284

WINNING WORDS—1. Foxes. 2. Wasted. 3. Fuel. 4. Fox. 5. Brig. 6. Batt. 7. Cap. 8. Foxy. 9. Dog. 10. Bombs (or Bombes). 11. Trick. 12. Sweet. 13. Boss. 14. Week.

SIX £100 WINNERS: Stoke B., Alston, Hexham, Northumberland; Mrs. F. Bowen, 23, Douglas Road, Hamilton; Mrs. A. Hilton, 37, Ellerton Rd., Hall Green, Birmingham; Mrs. F. Bowen, 23, Douglas Avenue, Belfast; L. Hampton, 6, Bowden Parade, Harrogate; Mrs. Pengelly, Carnely Cottage, Gloucester Road.

Runners-up Awards, value £25, shared between 29 entrants. In addition, Xmas Pudding goes to each prize-winner in this Contest.

SEE OPPOSITE PAGE FOR PRIZES VALUE £350

WASHING (BY THE NEW NO-BOIL METHOD) SAVES 1½ HOURS' TIME

Clothes last months longer —fuel saved—no hard rubbing, no backache!

YOU can save at least an hour and a half on an average wash if you do it the way so many women do now—by soaking the clothes instead of boiling them.

It gives wonderful results and it's better for the clothes. Shirts, for instance, give 4 months more wear.

Just do this. Make a rich lather with Rinso and hot water from the tap, and leave the clothes to soak in it for 12 minutes. After that just wash them through, rinse and hang to dry. If the things are very grubby a little dry Rinso smoothed on the damp clothes so that it forms a paste gets out dirt without rubbing.

This method saves coal or gas, too. You don't have to burn any extra fuel at all. Why not try the quick and easy Rinso way next washday?

Just a 12-minute soak in water as it comes from the hot tap—no boiling—and whites and coloureds come up dazzling!

RINSO SOAKS CLOTHES CLEAN

R3125-760-65 *R. S. Hudson Limited*

1½d PER OZ.

Pipes and Pouches

To-day when you want the fullest possible value for every penny, the lasting qualities of your tobacco become most important. That's where "Digger" Flake scores. Full flavoured but cool, it burns slowly and evenly, and gives a full return in smoking satisfaction and enjoyment.

PLAYER'S DIGGER TOBACCOS

FLAKE · CUBE · MIXTURE · PLUG · ROUGHCUT

P.D. 91

WIN A CHEQUE and PLUM PUDDING!

PLUM PUDDINGS FOR X WORDS: ONE WITH EVERY PRIZE

£100 CASH 1st PRIZE £25 VALUE IN NUMEROUS AWARDS

For result of Xword No. 284, see page 14; to win in this week's Competition, study clues carefully and enter on coupon below.

CLUES Answer every clue by either the letter in entry Column.	5P Entry-fee for 1 Col.	5P	5P	5P
1 IF YOU'VE GOOD THIN, IT WILL HELP TO KEEP YOU WARM	F RE			
2 OF THESE SENSES OF TOUCH IS ESPECIALLY EASY TO USE YOUR HAND	G ASS			>
3 GENERALLY IT'S DISTURBING TO HEAR NEIGHBOUR'S TUBA	SIN ING			
4 MANY PEOPLE HATE THE THOUGHT OF GIVING KISSES EVEN A SMALL ONE	G N			
5 MAN WHO IS TOO SHOULD HAVE SOME UNDERSTANDING OF HUMAN FRAILTY	EAK			
6 DOES WILL FIND IT DIFFICULT TO KEEP EMPLOYEES WHO MOVES ON TIME	MO E			
7 THIS KIND OF SOUND APPEALS TO FEW PEOPLE	ARI			
8 MAY SWEETNESS NOW BEFORE STORM	BE CH			
9 IT'S HARD TO CUT UP VERY YOUNG ONE	L G			
10 GENERALLY SPEAKING, IT APPEARS MORE ATTRACTIVE WHEN LIT UP	RAM			
11 SUCH MANNER MAY SOMETIMES CONCEAL SCOUNDREL'S DESIGNS AND	SIL Y			
12 IT'S UNUSUAL NOWADAYS TO ENGAGE BIG GUN FOR NEW UNDERTAKING	ST FF			
13 INDEFINITE MAN WHO KNOWS HE'S RIGHT WON'T FEAR STANDING UP TO	BO S			
14 SOLDIERS WILL FIGHT BETTER IF CONFIDENT OF THEIR	ASE			

FREE ENTRIES Send in entries at rate of 6d. for each 2 columns submitted. 2 columns FREE with each 6 paid. Entries on plain paper equally eligible—same rule of entry-fee.

Closing Postmark MON., JAN. 5.

I agree to enter in accordance with the Rules and enclose necessary P.O. or stamps entry-fee, including 1d. for "Bulletin" and "Gazette."

P.O. Value..... No.....

Signed .....

Address .....

(No. 287)

CUT ROUND THIS LINE

ADDRESS ENTRY With Xwords you may enclose "Bullets"—one entry-fee covers both entries.

RULES 1.—First Prize in Bullets will be awarded for best Bullet received, and other prizes in order of merit, the test being cleverness, appropriateness and originality. Xwords First Prize will go to competitor submitting most meritorious set of Answers to Clues provided, that in this case, being options and accuracy of Answers in relation to Clues. Prize divided in event of tie or ties. Awards value £25 between Runners-up. Not more than one Xword Prize ever received/allowed to any one entrant. Complete Xword in ink, not pencil. 2.—The Editor undertakes that every entry in Bullets and Xwords shall receive careful consideration by staff of competent adjudicators. 3.—To cover 1d. Bulletin charge and entry-fee, enclose P.O. or stamps—6d. per two Bullets or 6d. per two Xword columns used. Two Xword columns FREE with each 6d. paid. If P.O. used, make payable to JOHN BULL, cross "& Co.", write name and address on back. Coupons must not be mutilated. Members of H.M. Forces allowed half-rate entry-fee if coupons personally completed and Service rank indicated. 4.—Entries are only accepted on the condition that results of this week's Contests, to appear in "John Bull" dated January 24, also Editor's decision in any matter of dispute, are accepted as final and legally binding. Employees of Odhams Press Ltd. and their families not eligible.

CASH NEW PRIZES FAMILY CAKES!

£175 £50 £20 £10 CASH PRIZES HAMPER of Seasonable LUXURIES 5/- 3/- 2/- 50 FREE GIFTS

USE ANY OF THESE "EXAMPLES" TO make a Bullet simply add TWO, THREE or FOUR words of apt and original comment to any of the Examples below.

Result of "Bullets" No. 1,302 appears on page 14

SERVING THE NATION ALL IN	GETTING TO GRIPS
HITLER'S SLAVES	CAMOUFLAGE EXPERT
THE CAUSE IS JUST, SO	WE LAUGH AT GRANDPA, BUT
DECLINING	SHE FORGOT
WHEN WE INVADE GERMANY	TO SAVE PAPER
CONSCRIPTION	MAKING THINGS HOT
MAN IN THE LIME-LIGHT	COMRADESHIP
AFRAID OF NOTHING	IN THE OLD DAYS
PRICES AND WAGES	NOT TO BE SNIFFED AT
WAY THINGS ARE GOING	Six "Examples" here are for completion with any ONE additional word of your choice in the position indicated by dotted line.

SPIRIT OF.....
ON THE ROAD TO.....
SHADOW OVER.....
MIGHT HAVE BEEN...
GIRL ME .....
SOUND OF THE.....

EXAMPLE .....
BULLET .....
EXAMPLE .....
BULLET .....
EXAMPLE .....
BULLET .....
EXAMPLE .....
BULLET .....

TWO FREE ENTRIES may be entered with each four pair-plain paper entries allowed.

I agree to enter in accordance with the Rules and enclose P.O. or stamps entry-fee at rate of 6d. for each 4 pairs paid Bullets on this Coupon, including 1d. for "Bulletin" and "Gazette."

P.O. Value..... No.....

Closing Postmark MON., JAN. 5.

1,305

Signed .....

Address .....

CUT ROUND THIS LINE

ADDRESS YOUR ENTRY "Bullets" No. 1,305—or Xword No. 287, "JOHN BULL" LONG ACRE, LONDON, W.C.2 (Comp.).

OVERHEARD IN THE RUSH HOURS

'No hope — perhaps she thinks we ought to WALK home!'

'War workers first' — make this your travel motto and keep off the trains, the trams, and the buses during the rush hours. If you don't some essential war worker may get left, and both he and his job will suffer.

TRAVEL BETWEEN 10 & 4 and don't crowd out the War Workers!

Issued by the Ministry of War Transport and Ministry of Labour and National Service

Fynnon Salt

stops backache

"It has done what it advertises," claims L. M., writing from Dover. Like millions of folk she has reason to be delighted with Fynnon, which not only washed away rheumatic acids which were giving her backache, but reduced her overweight too. She says: *"I bought a tin of Fynnon Salt for backache and stoutness and very much to my great relief it has done what it advertises. My aches have gone and my weight is down."*

Rheumatic acids can cause many kinds of rheumatics, pain and stiffness. Let Fynnon Salt wash away yours! Large tin 1/5 at all chemists. Trial size 7d. Including Purchase Tax.

NATURE'S SALT OF THE EARTH

TRY A FORTNIGHT ON FYNNON

Fynnon Ltd., Ge. West Rd., Brentford, Middx.

SKIN SUFFERERS!

Try This amazing Liquid Healer

If spots, pimples, rashes or sore places worry you, apply D.D.D. Prescription and see how quickly they disappear. Skin trouble cannot resist the healing power of this soothing liquid. D.D.D. Prescription gives speedy relief in the most severe case of Eczema, Dermatitis, Impetigo, Ulcers, Bad Legs. All the soreness goes, the burning irritation disappears. Open places heal up and before long your skin is restored to health without a blemish. Splendid, too, in cases of cuts, wounds, scalds. At all chemists, 2/3 per bottle (tax inc.).

D.D.D. PRESCRIPTION

We must go easy with the fuel this Christmas

We must economise in fuel right throughout the winter. Even at Christmas we mustn't let up. The factories are going all out on war production. They have first call on fuel.

ECONOMISE IN EVERY WAY YOU CAN

Here are some examples:

Have a fire in one room only.

Never leave the gas or the electric fire on in an empty room

Turn the gas or the electric fire down or off when the room is warm

Take off the surplus coal before going to bed

Call at your Coal Office or Gas or Electricity Showroom for advice and leaflets on how to economise.

Save FUEL for the factories

All Fuels are equally important

COAL · COKE · GAS · ELECTRICITY · FUEL OIL · PARAFFIN

ISSUED BY THE MINES DEPARTMENT

When so much
DEPENDS ON THE FEET

In the armed forces, the A.R.P. and other National Services, millions of men and women are on their feet for longer hours than ever before. But your feet won't ache or let you down if you treat them regularly with Zam-Buk Ointment.
The refined medicinal oils in Zam-Buk are easily absorbed. Thus Zam-Buk causes aching, soreness and swelling to vanish like magic, it heals blisters and chilblains and brings corns out, root and all. Start with Zam-Buk to-day!

Zam-Buk

GET A BOX TO-DAY!

Washing your hands before every meal is a moment's work, but if you use Family Health Soap it's a protection for your health. The germs in dirt are infectious, and your hands can pass on their infection. So don't fight the dirt with the antiseptic lather of Family Health Soap.

First Aid Tips from the Family Health Worker

STIMULANTS: Don't give alcohol. Hot tea, coffee or milk are safer. But in cases of internal injury give nothing but ice or sips of cold water.

KH 71-68-68

JOHN KNIGHT LIMITED—SOAP MAKERS SINCE 1809

British Gold

SMOKING MIXTURE

A mild and exceedingly fragrant mixture, blended from specially picked fine old matured leaf.

Recommended with all confidence for the occasion which demands a more than usually choice and mellow tobacco.

for Sundays

PER 1/5 OZ.

CAPENSIS

GUARANTEED 100

We ask your indulgence should your Retailer be temporarily out of stock.

Made only by

The BRITISH PATENT PERFORATED PAPER Co. Ltd.
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When Miners are 'IN' the news gets out!

everyone knows
THE BEST VALUE IN THE MARKET
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